

ISSUE

100

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

CLONE SAGA: PART 4

BENDIS
BAGLEY
DELL
HENNESSY

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CLONE SAGA! PART 4

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PREVIOUSLY IN ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN...

The bite of a genetically-altered spider granted high school student Peter Parker incredible, arachnid-like powers! When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his amazing abilities to protect his fellow man. He learned the invaluable lesson that with great power must also come great responsibility...

Now the fledgling super hero tries to balance a full high school curriculum, a night job as a web designer for the *Daily Bugle* tabloid, a friendship with the beautiful Mary Jane Watson, and swing time as the misunderstood, web-slinging Spider-Man.

After Peter's friend Gwen Stacy died at the hands of a genetic monstrosity known as Carnage, Peter and his Aunt May—who's raised Peter since the death of his parents—moved to a new house...and he became much more cautious in his relationship with MJ.

So when, on a casual mall outing with MJ, Peter is attacked by a genetic duplicate of himself, he makes sure MJ gets clear. Unfortunately, MJ is soon kidnapped and taken to an abandoned Oscorp laboratory. She's held prisoner by a horribly scarred, tattered version of Peter—who swears he's found a way to keep MJ safe from harm...by making her like him!

When Peter learns that MJ has disappeared, he searches for her—discovering instead Gwen Stacy, back from the dead...and as confused as he is...while the two try to figure things out, they're caught by Aunt May, who is completely freaked out by the reappearance of a girl she last saw dead in her own backyard.

Peter does the only thing he can—he reveals himself as Spider-Man to his Aunt May. May tells him to take Gwen and to leave her house immediately.

The confrontation is interrupted when Peter's father, long thought dead, walks right into the kitchen.



CLONE SAGA

Part 4

Brian Michael
Bendis
WRITER

Mark
Bagley
PENCILER

John & Drew
Dell Hennessy
INKERS

Justin
Ponsor
COLORIST

VC's Cory
Petit
LETTERER

Brad
Johansen
PRODUCTION

John
Barber
ASSOC. EDITOR

Ralph
Macchio
EDITOR

Joe
Quesada
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dan
Buckley
PUBLISHER

Cover: Mark Bagley & Richard Isanove

Alternate Cover: Mark Bagley & Richard Isanove (after John Romita)



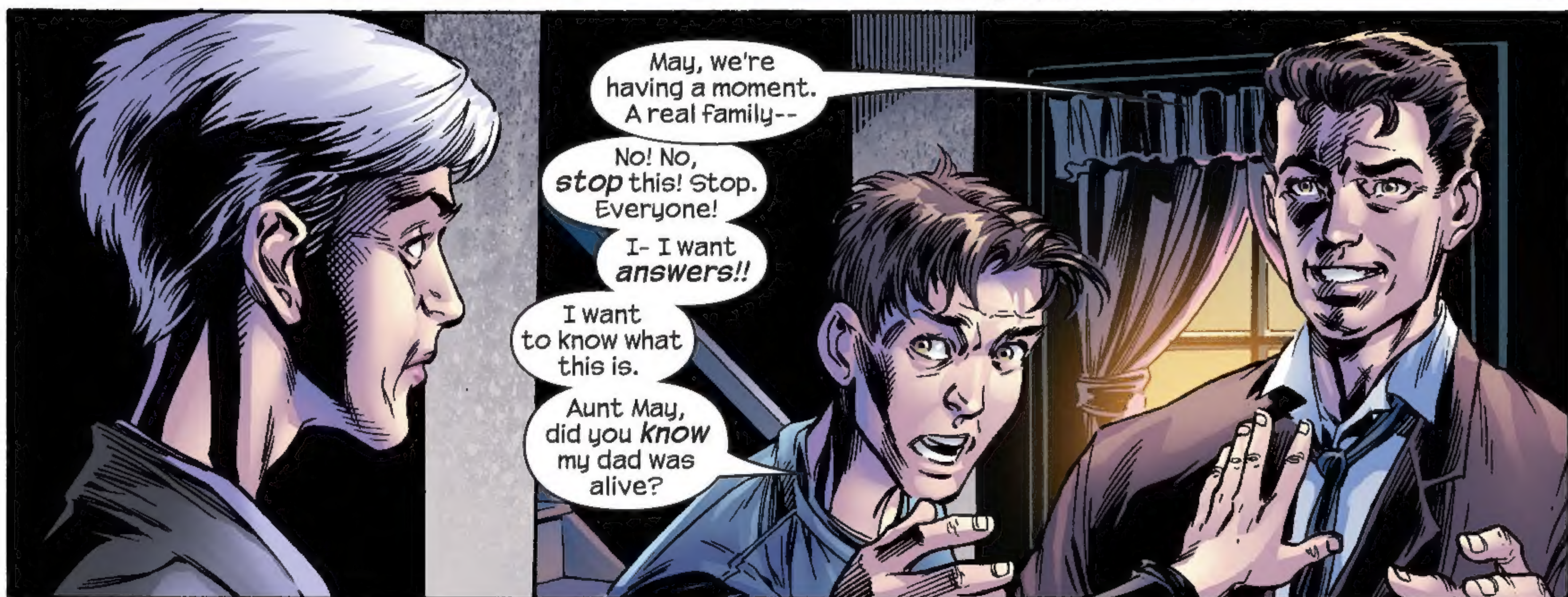


Now get out!!

All of you!! I've had enough Parker drama for the rest of my life!

My sister married you, not me!

Peter, I don't want you in this house!!



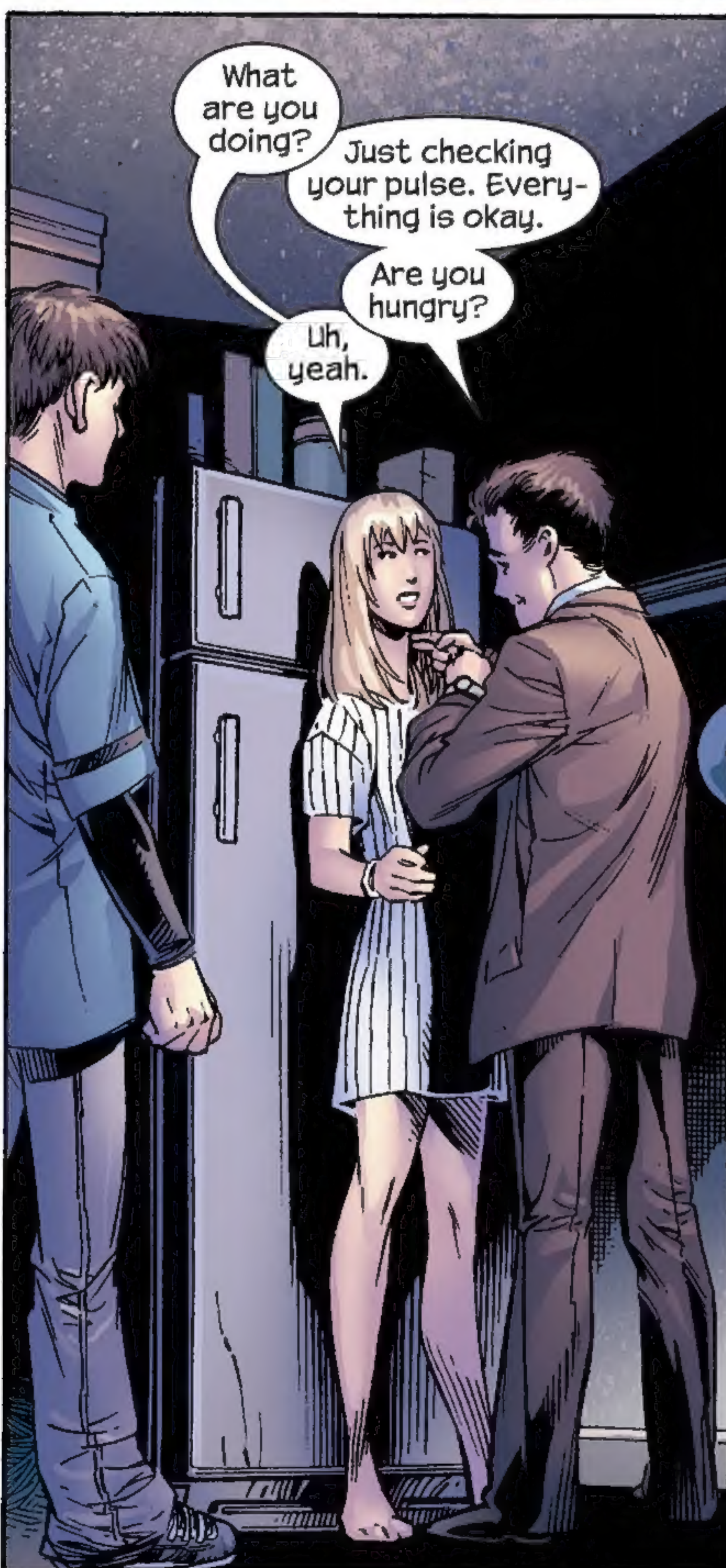
May, we're having a moment. A real family--

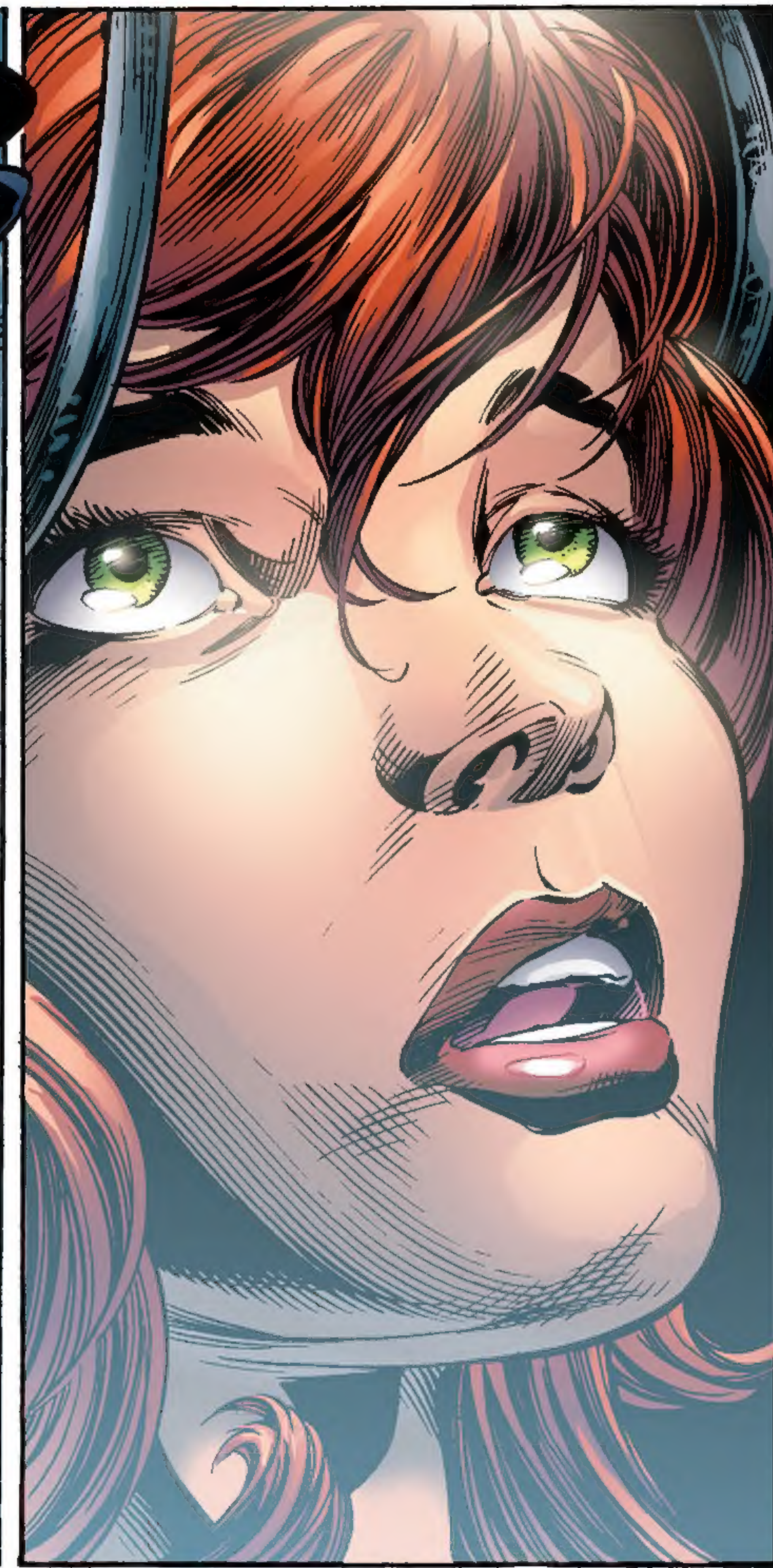
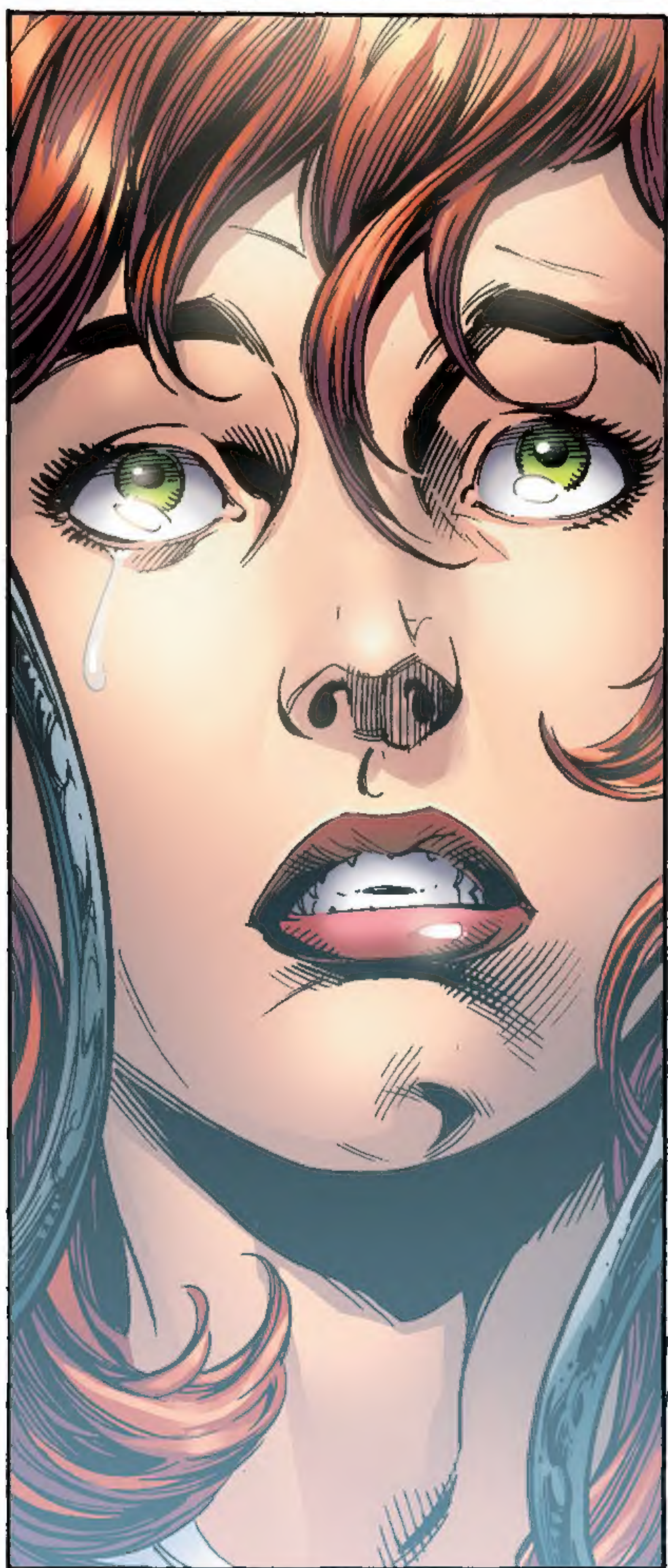
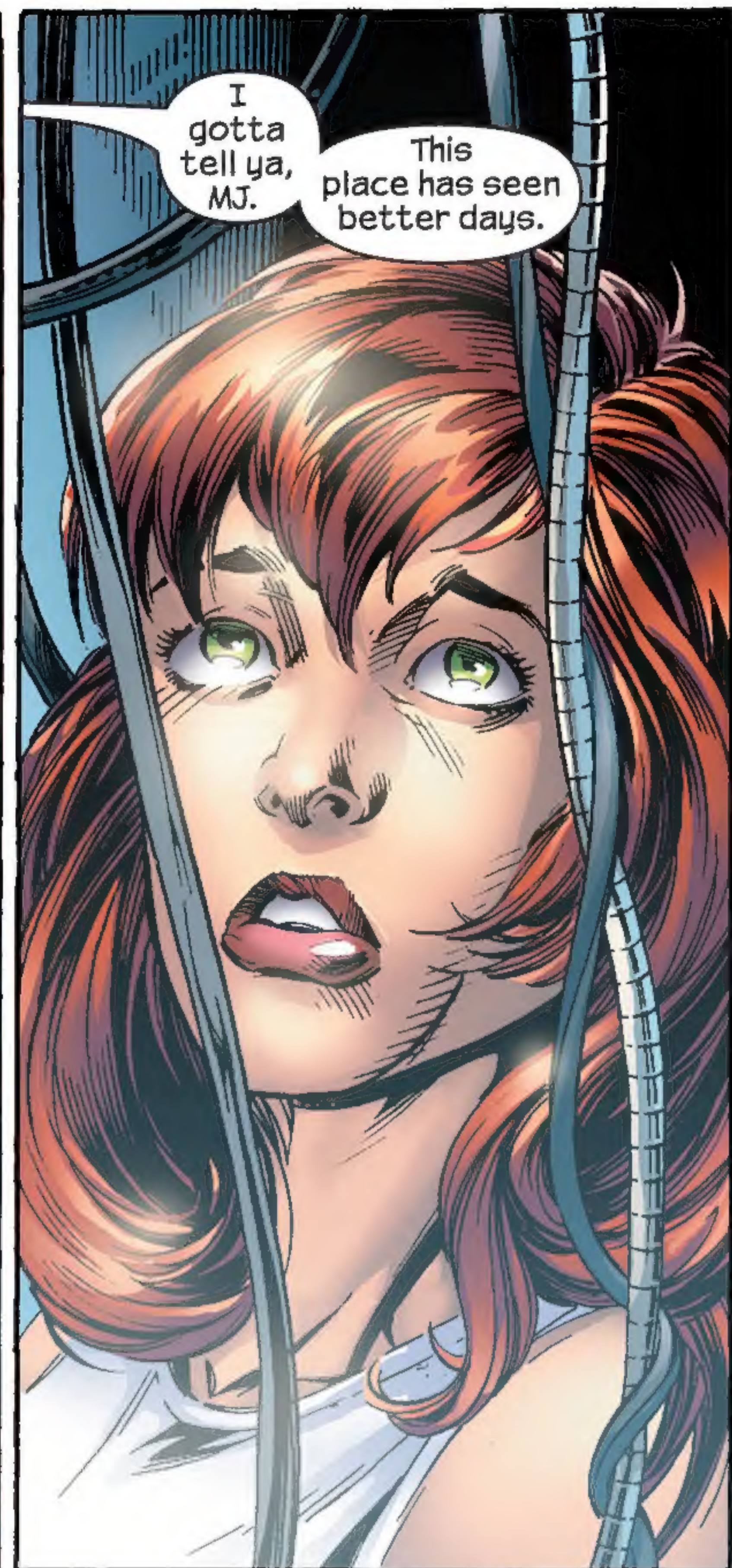
No! No, stop this! Stop. Everyone!

I- I want answers!!

I want to know what this is.

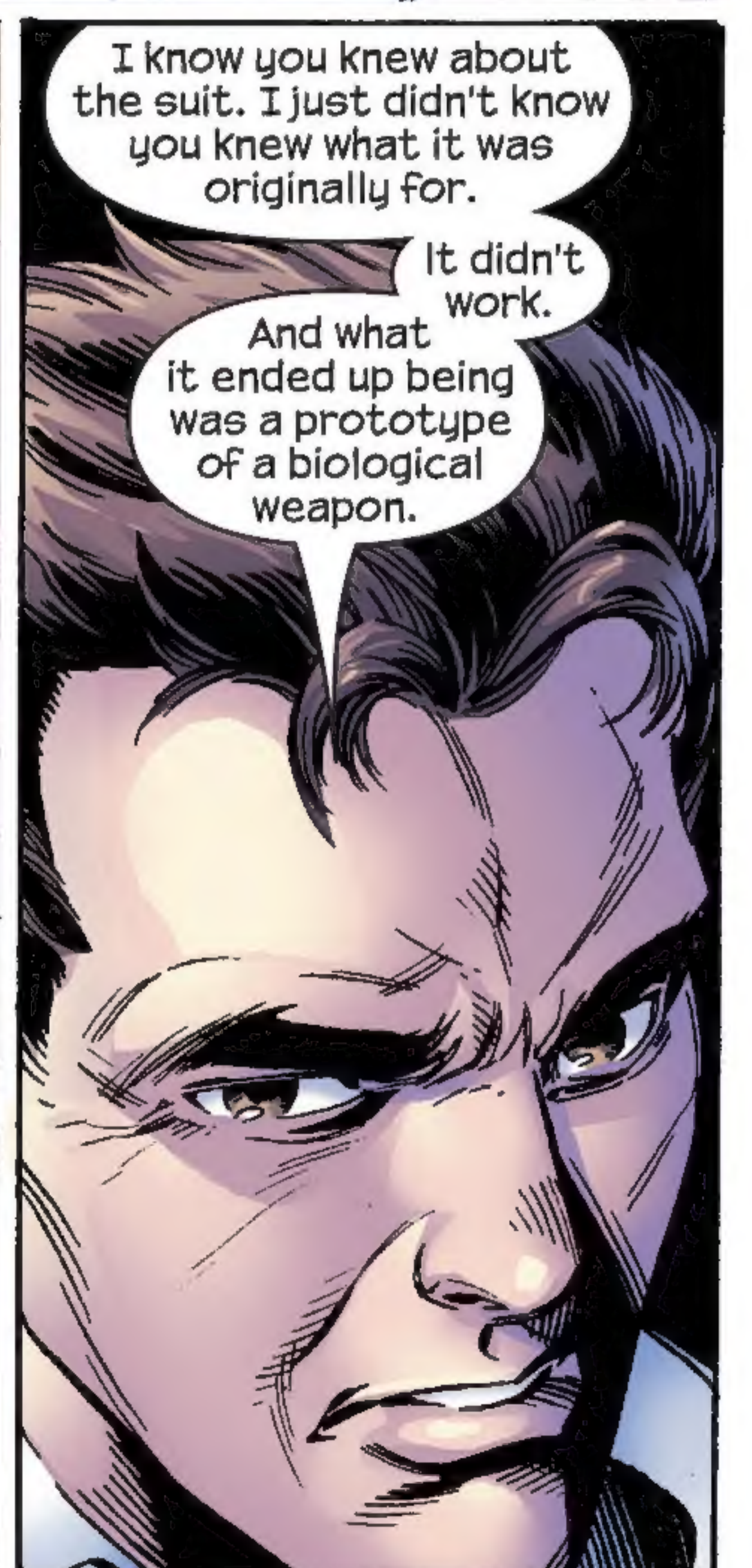
Aunt May, did you know my dad was alive?







Get
away from
her.



"This was complete failure to me."

"I wasn't looking to make weapons or freak biological accidents."

"I was trying to *help* people."

"But like the guy who accidentally discovered penicillin...sometimes you get what you get."

"And the people we were working for technically owned it."

"And *they* liked what they had."

The man who "owned" it was named Bolivar Trask. He's dead now.

But back then he *had* us.

We begged him to stop doing biological weapon experiments with what we found- and his lawyers shut us down.

They took it away from us.

You can't countersue a billion-dollar corporation unless you have a billion dollars and I didn't have a billion dollars.

And I ran out of money.

And I was sitting in my basement, not allowed to work on my life's work.

But irony of all ironies is that Trask still *needed* us- we were the experts.

He was willing to make a new deal.

We got an offer from Trask Industries to continue our work.

A second chance.

They'd still want to figure out the biological weapon angle but at least we'd get to control it and actually own a little piece of it.

And, uh, I said yes.

"Eddie Brock was my partner in all this."

"So the Brocks and the Parkers were going to be rich and famous."

"We were all invited to Chicago for a contract signing and a big celebration but--"

Richard, get on the plane.

It's wrong.

I can't. It- it's not what I want my life to be like.

What do you--?

This isn't what I wanted from my life's work.

What *did* you want your life to be like, Richard?

They are going to create this with or without you.

So you can either get what you have coming to you and control the situation from within *and* get a little piece of it...

Or you can sit it out and wonder what happened.

"Control it from within"? Mary, that's just--

It's *grown-up* talk, Richard.

You have a son! You don't think he knows what's going on?

This is a *second* chance!

Get on the plane!

No.

No.



Richard--
What's going on?
He doesn't want to *sign* now, Ed.
We're- are you serious?

It's not what we wanted.

Yeah, I know.

We're- I thought we agreed we're kinda past that now. We're broke.

I'm out.
You're out??

I'm an officer of our corporation, I can sign it, too.

I don't want this.



Grow up!
(I'm so sick of this.)
Just- come on, let's just go, we'll--

No.

I'll call you when we land--

"I'd love to tell you the last words your mother said to me were 'I love you.'"

"But they weren't."

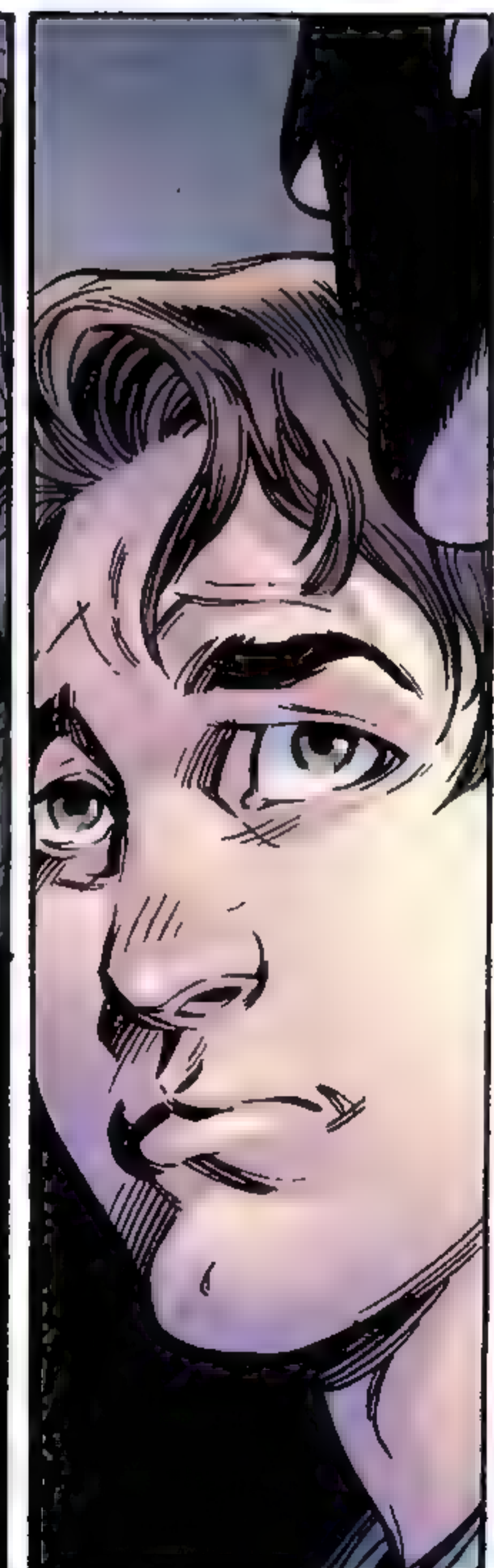
"I'm pretty sure we would have gotten divorced had the plane not crashed."

"I loved your mom."

"I *still* love your mom. But it wasn't going well."



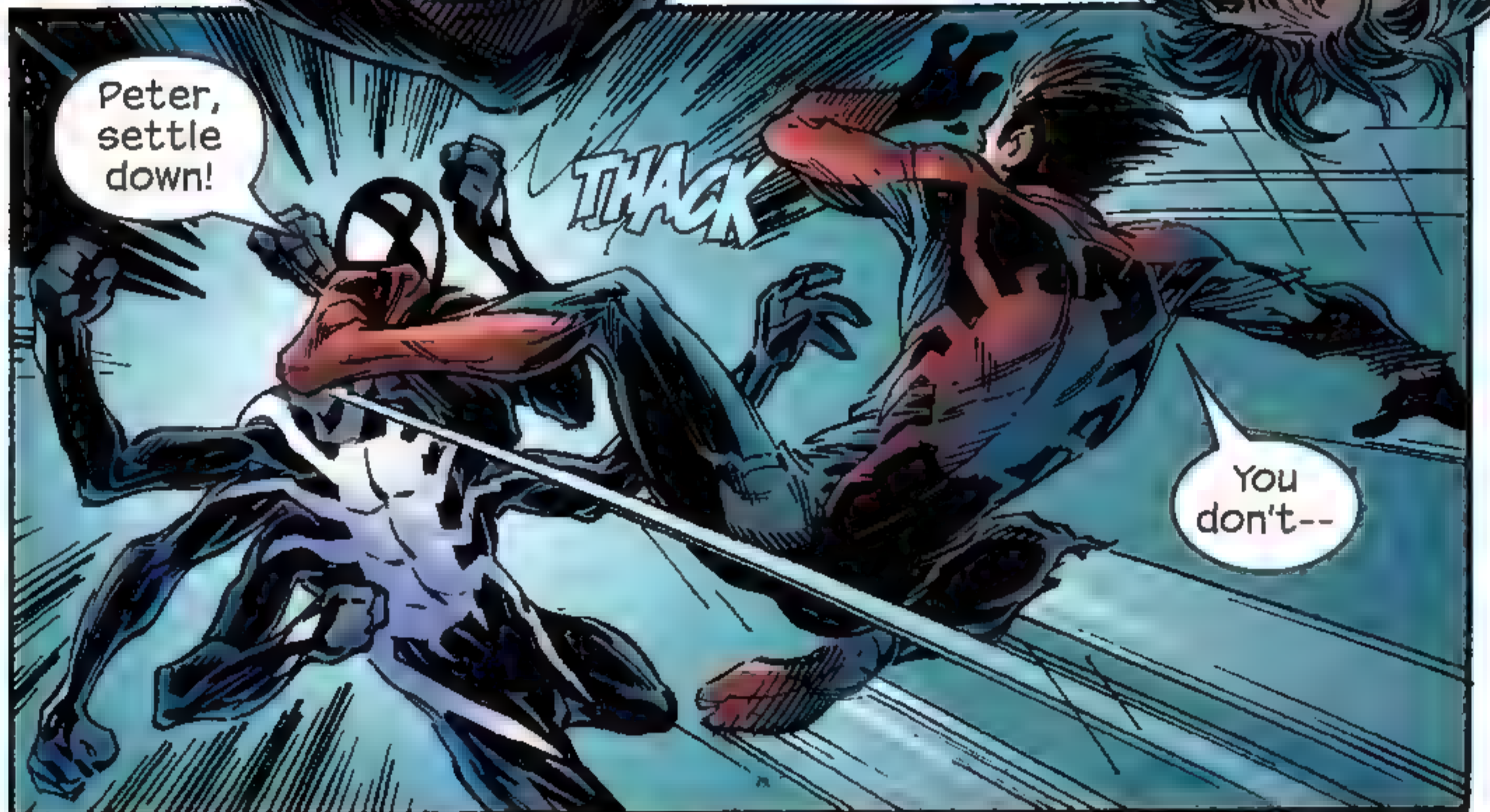
And she wasn't wrong, by the way.
In theory.

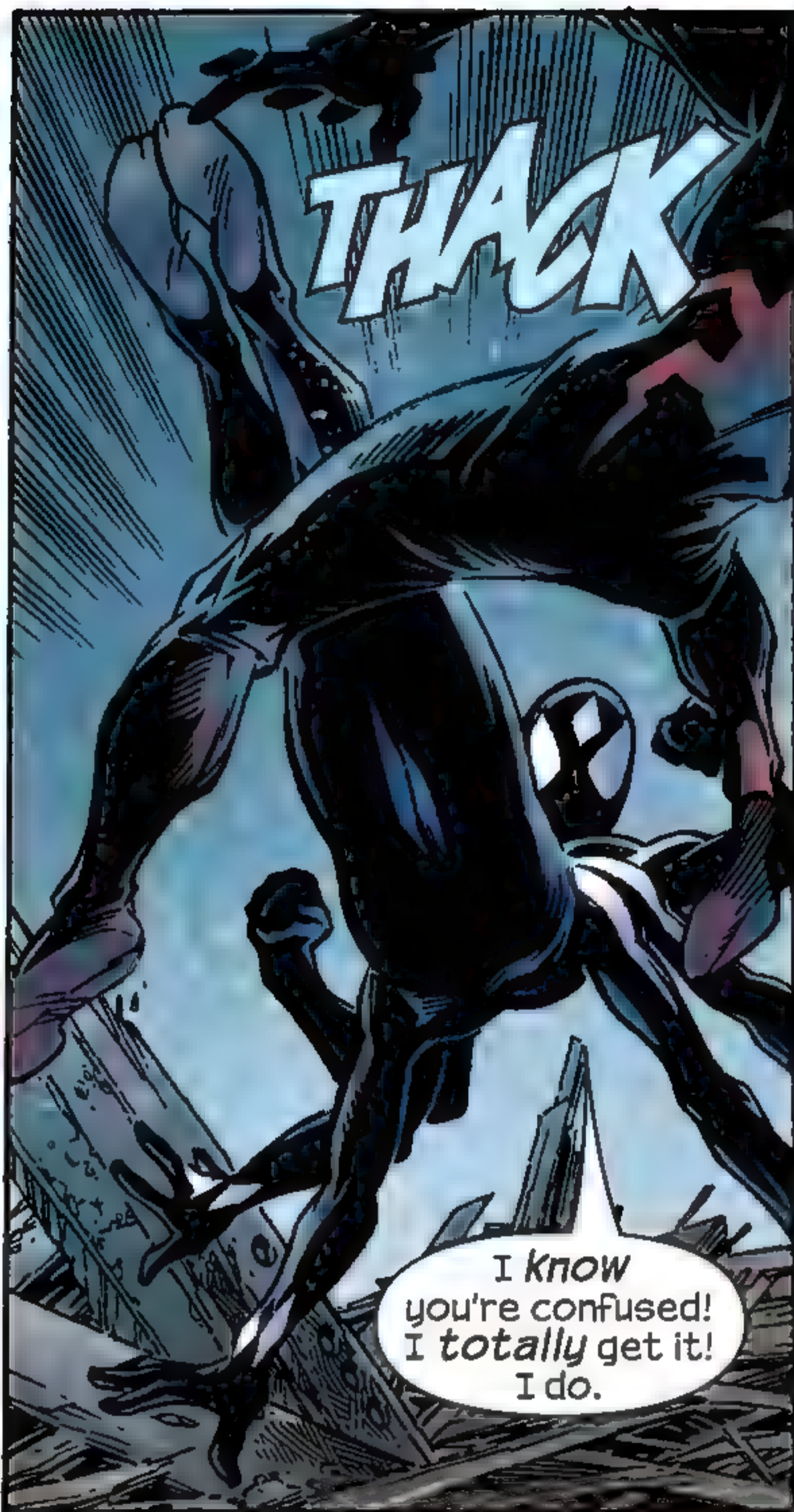


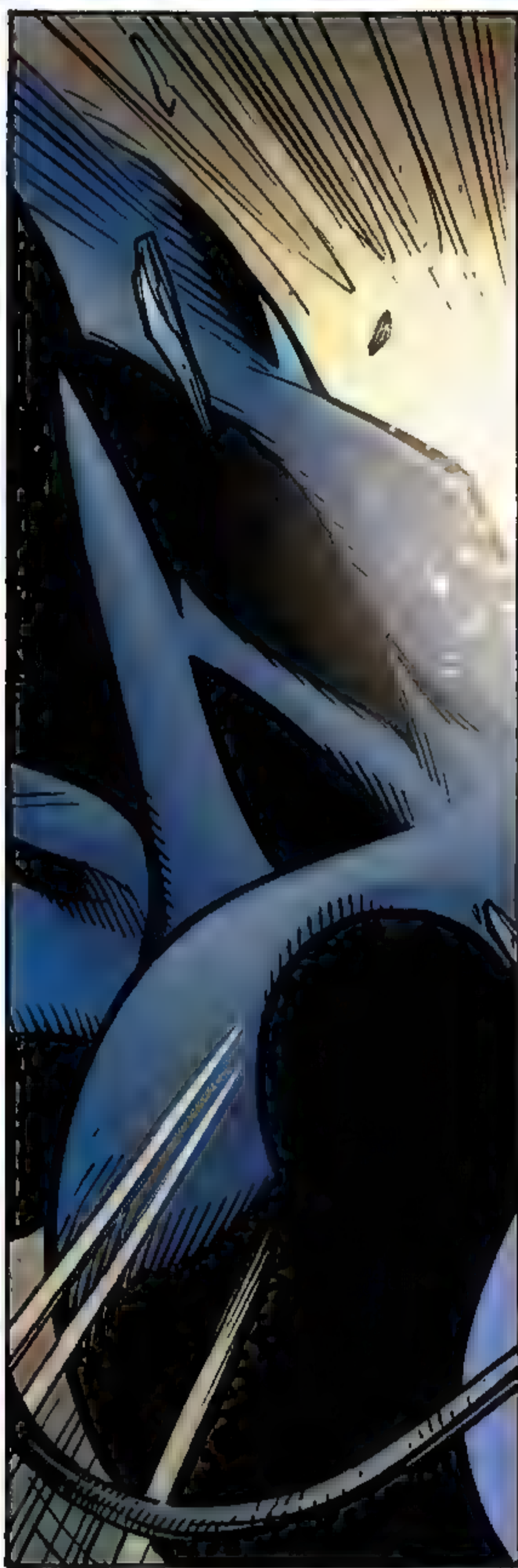
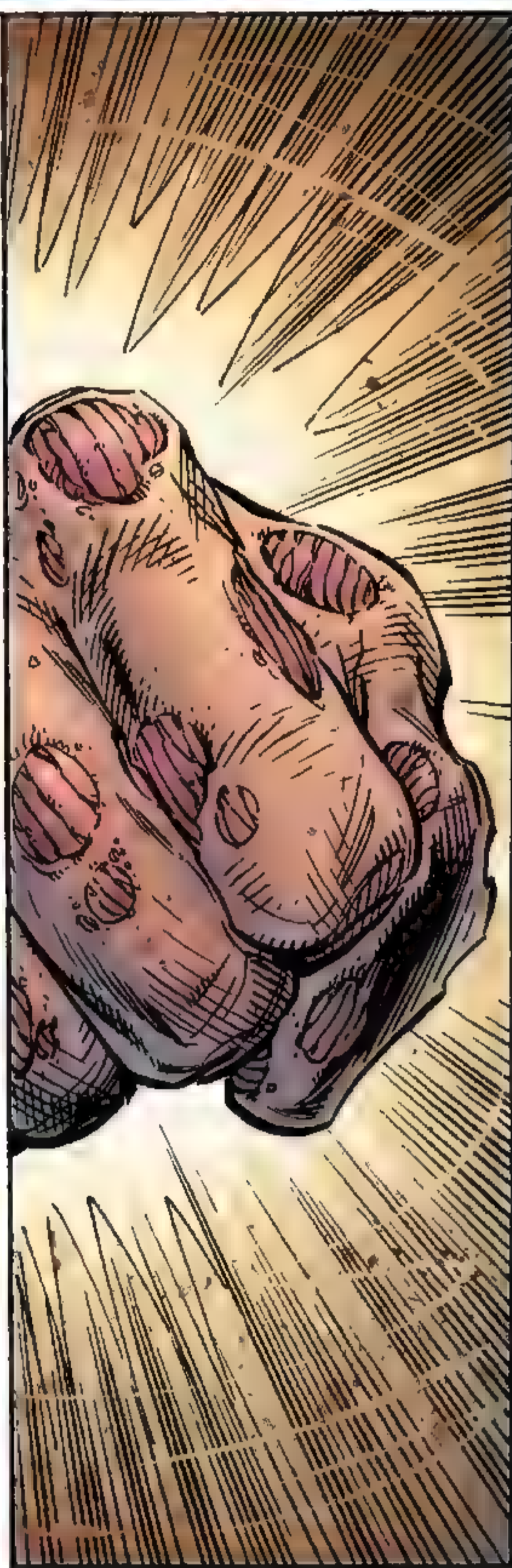
Dad, how is Gwen alive?
We saw her dead, now she's alive.
Is she alive because of you?
Is *that* why you're here?



Yes, actually.
Smart boy.









So, this part you're probably not going to like.



I was dead.

Metaphorically, sure.

But I *was* in actuality. In every legal sense.

The plane log had me on board. I was a ghost.



"I didn't know how to tell my family I was okay, because I wasn't okay. My life was completely over.

"I couldn't feel anything.

"I certainly wasn't in a position to raise this bright little toddler who looked the spitting image of his mom.



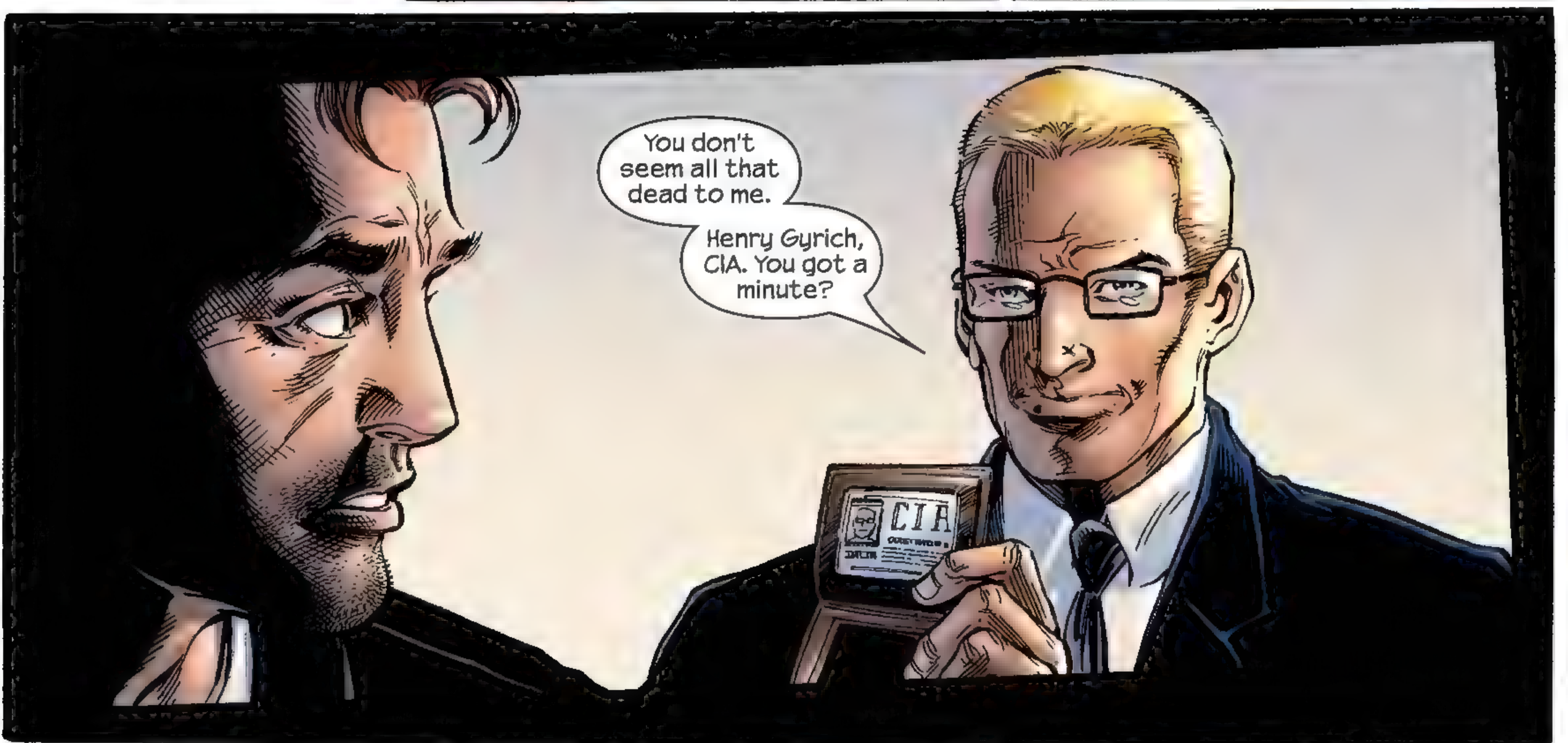
"Thank *God* for May and Ben. Thank *God* they *loved* you so much.

"I thought- the plan, if I ever had one, was that I was going to come back to get you, Peter.

"I just needed to find myself.

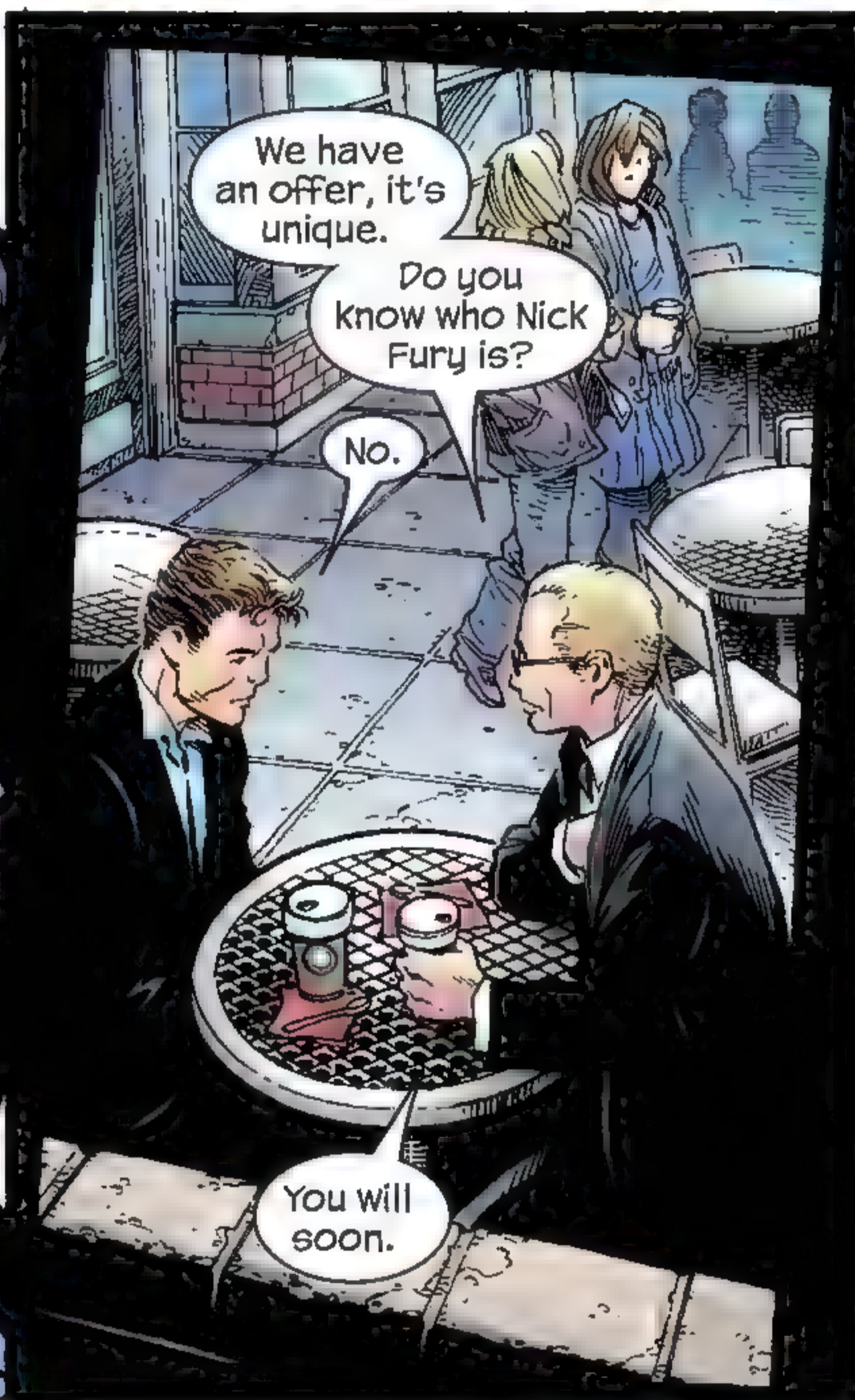
"But other things got in the way. Life caught up with me."

Mister Parker.

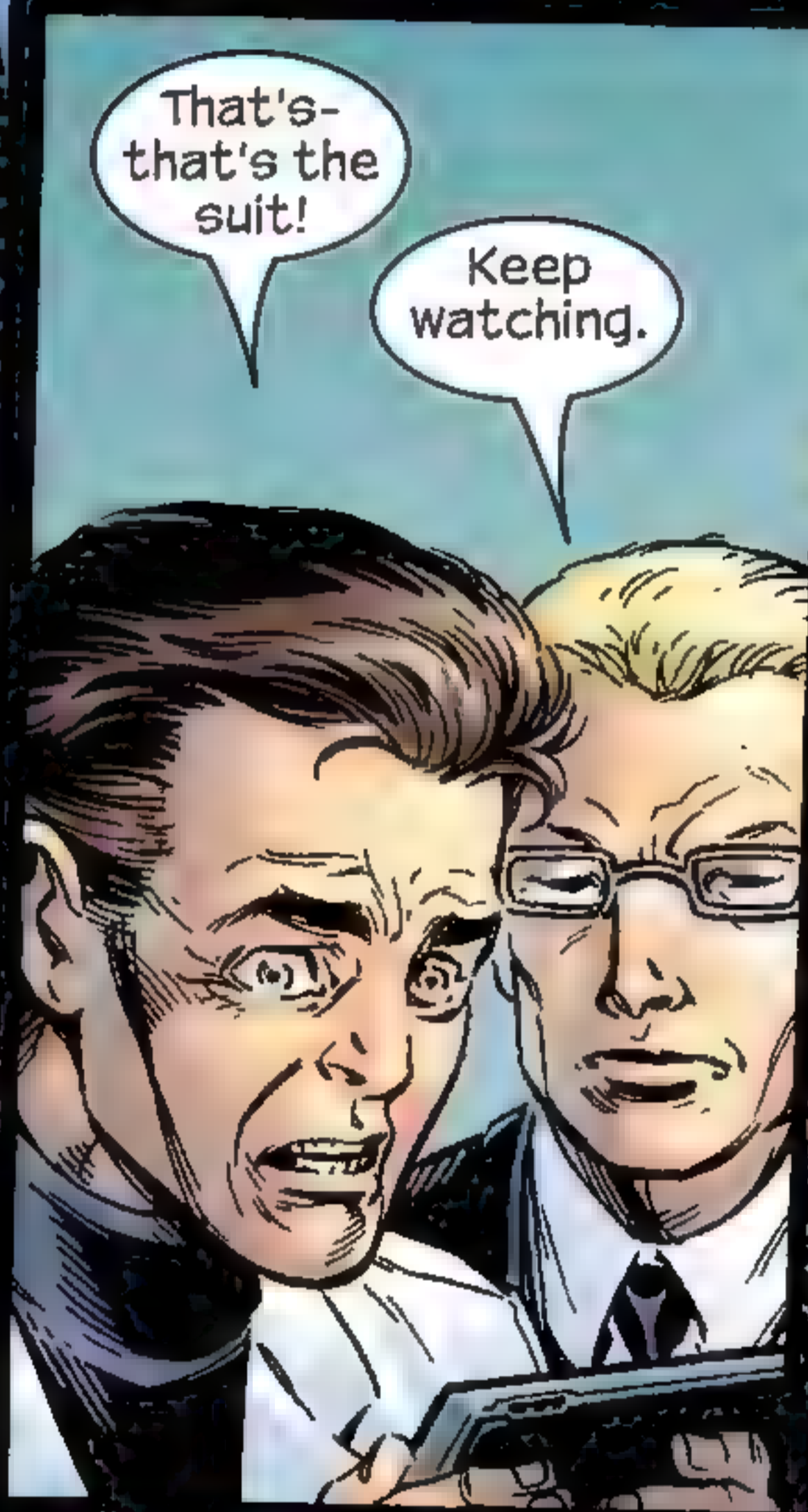
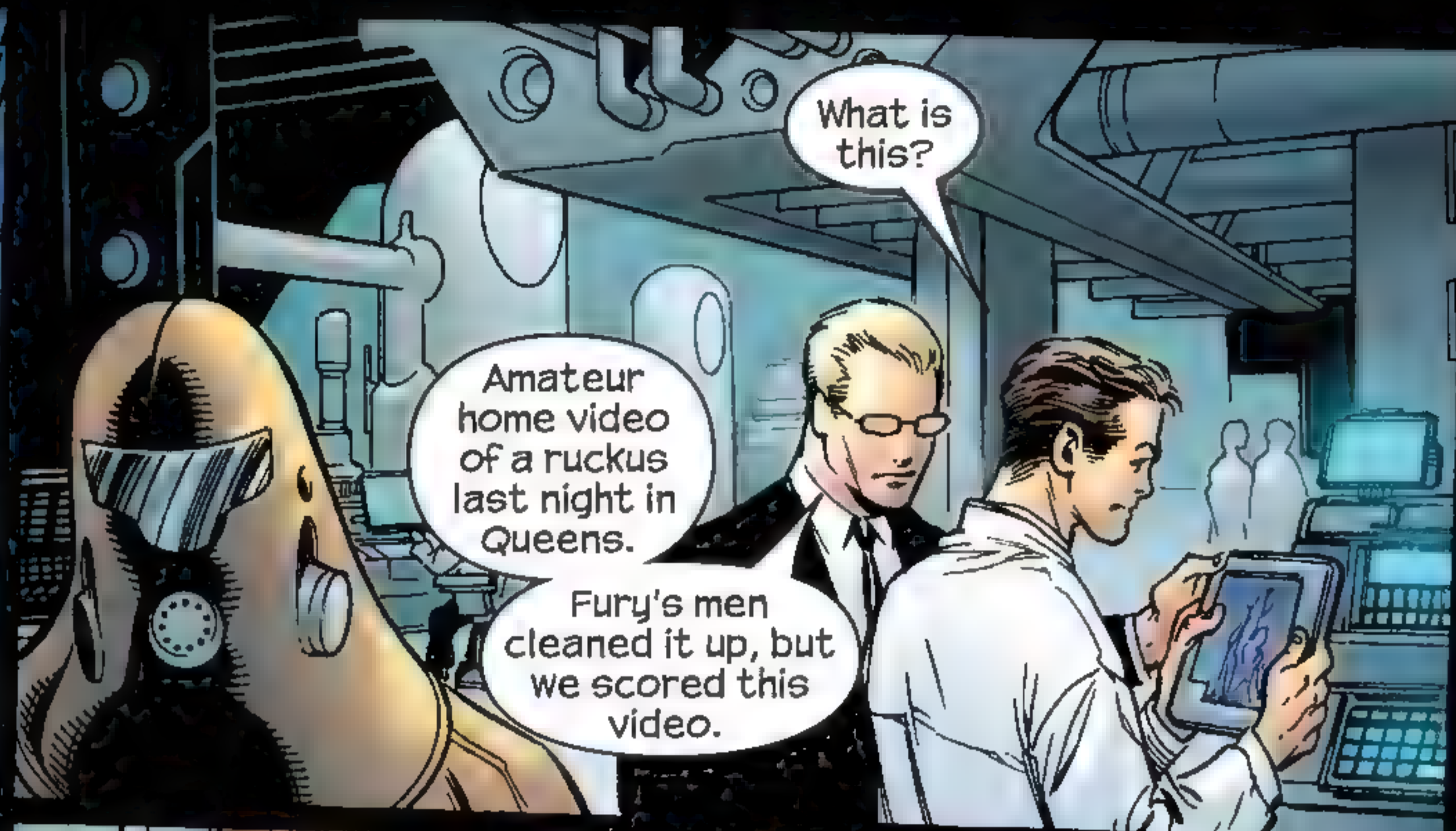


You don't seem all that dead to me.

Henry Gyrich, CIA. You got a minute?









Oh my God...

Keep watching.



That boy...
Mutant?

Nope.

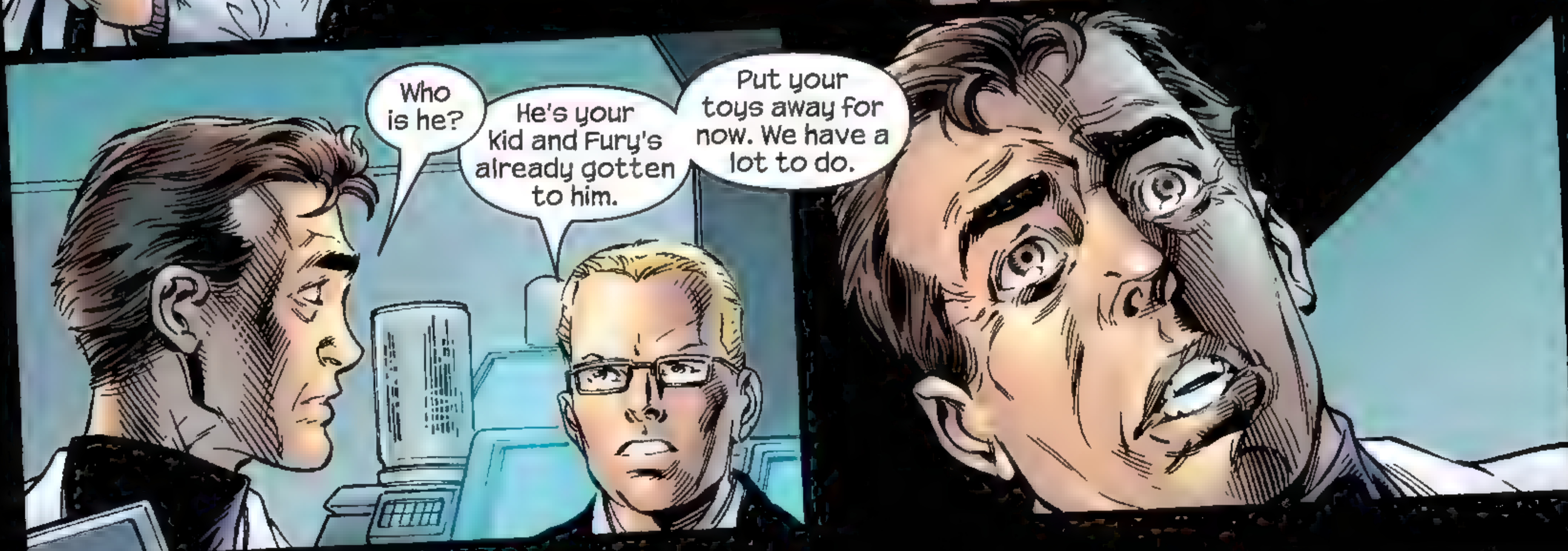
That's
Spider-Man.

The guy-
the guy in the
costume?

Usually,
but not last
night.

He looked
ten years
old.

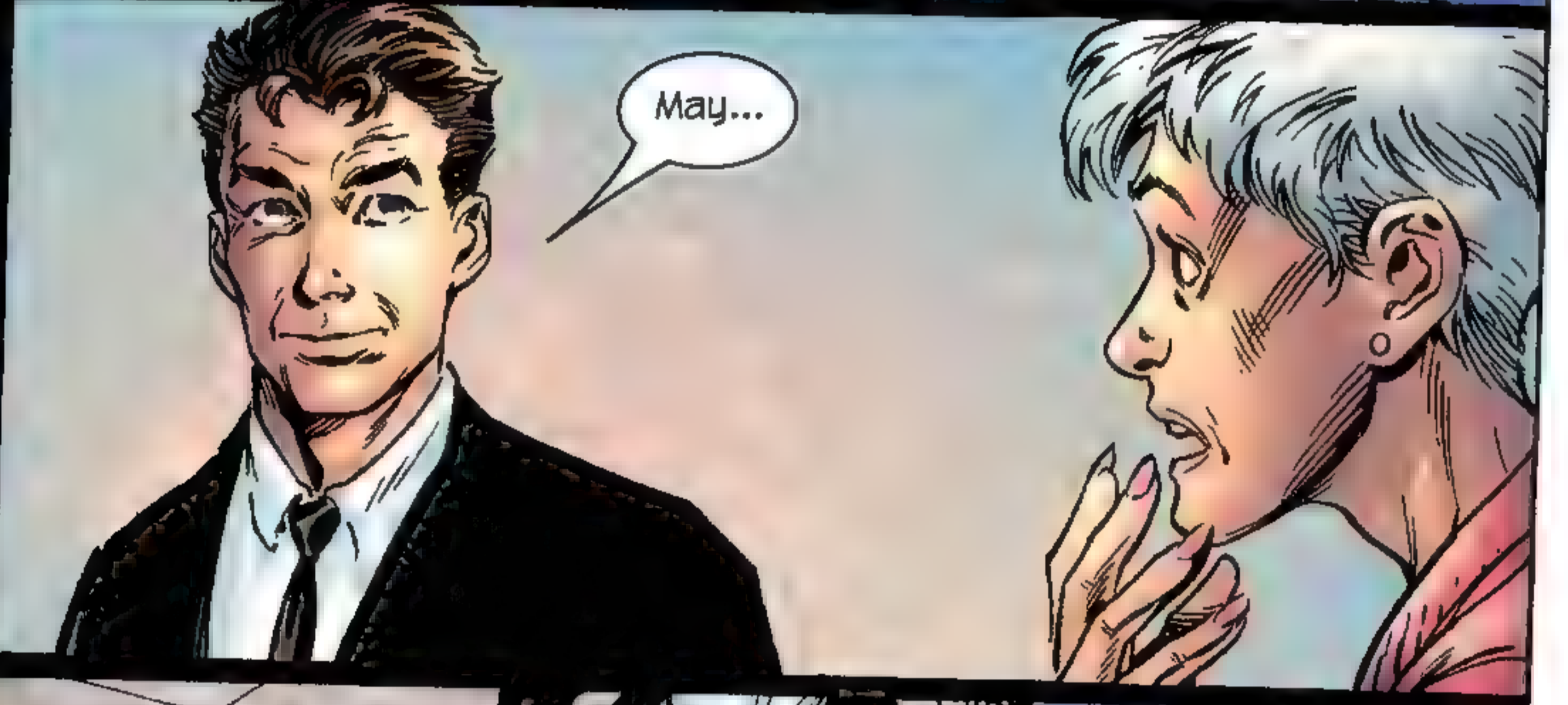
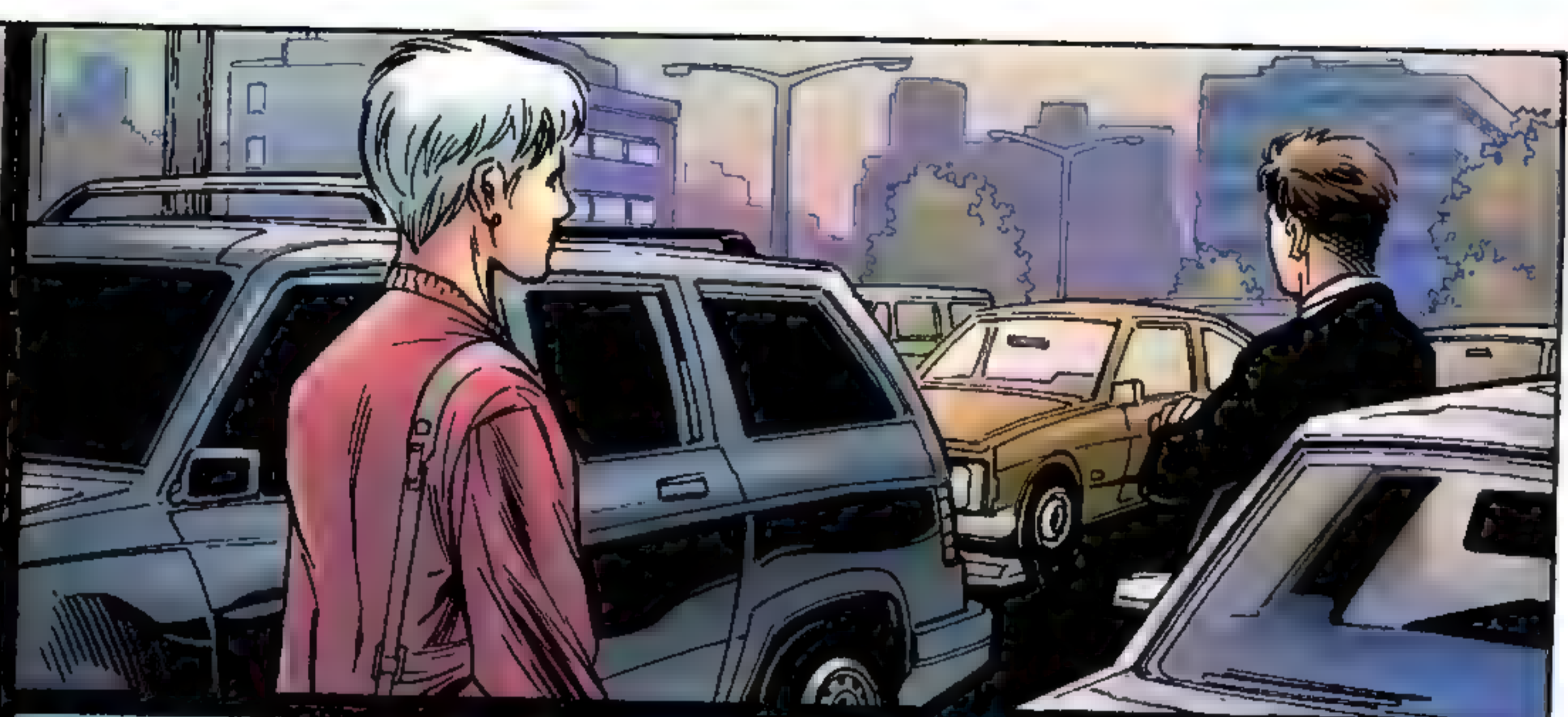
Fifteen.



Who
is he?

He's your
kid and Fury's
already gotten
to him.

Put your
toys away for
now. We have a
lot to do.





You monster!!

I wasn't *on* the plane.

Go to hell!

I was supposed to be.



All this time??

You stay away from him.

You're an evil, selfish monster and you don't deserve to even *know* him.

I- I didn't kill Mary.

I didn't mean for *any* of this to happen.



What do you want from us, Richard? A family? Hugs?

You stay away from *me* and you stay away from *him*. I mean it, Richard!!

He has a chance to be happy.

The first Parker in history to grow up and have a normal life and be happy.

And I swear to God if you come at him like this, I will--



Normal life?

May, he's *special*.

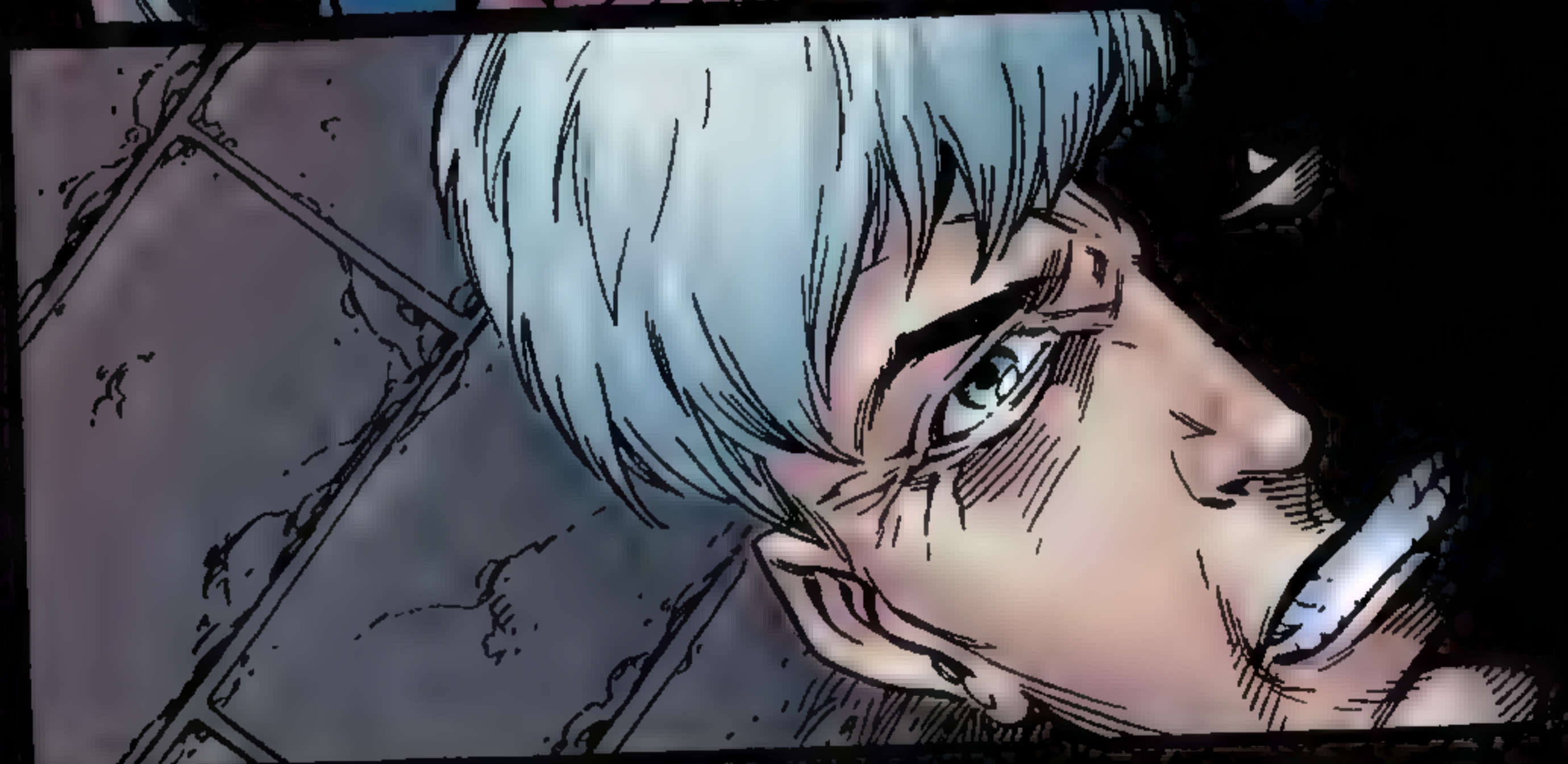
No thanks to you.

Do you even know *how* special he is?

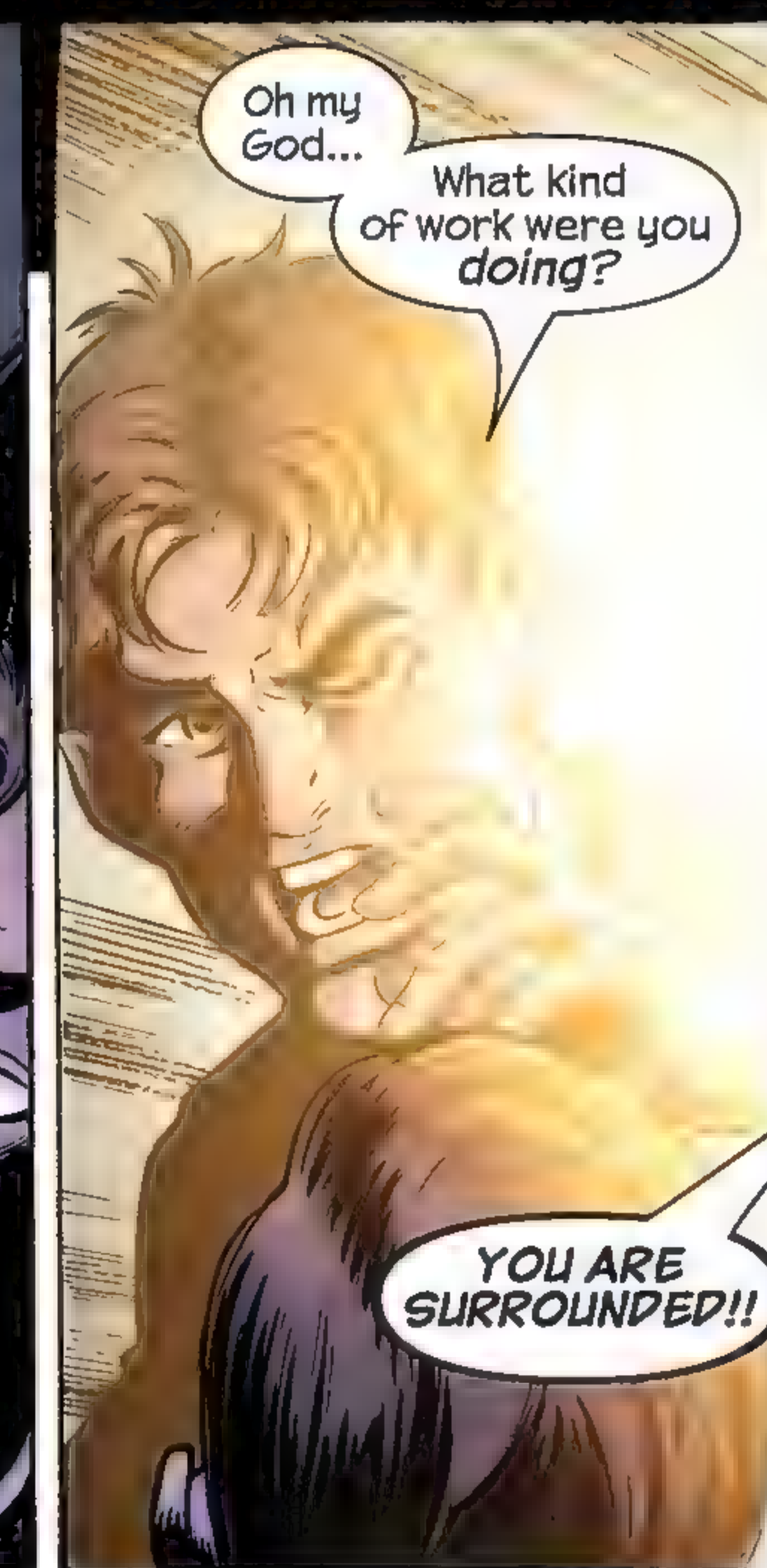
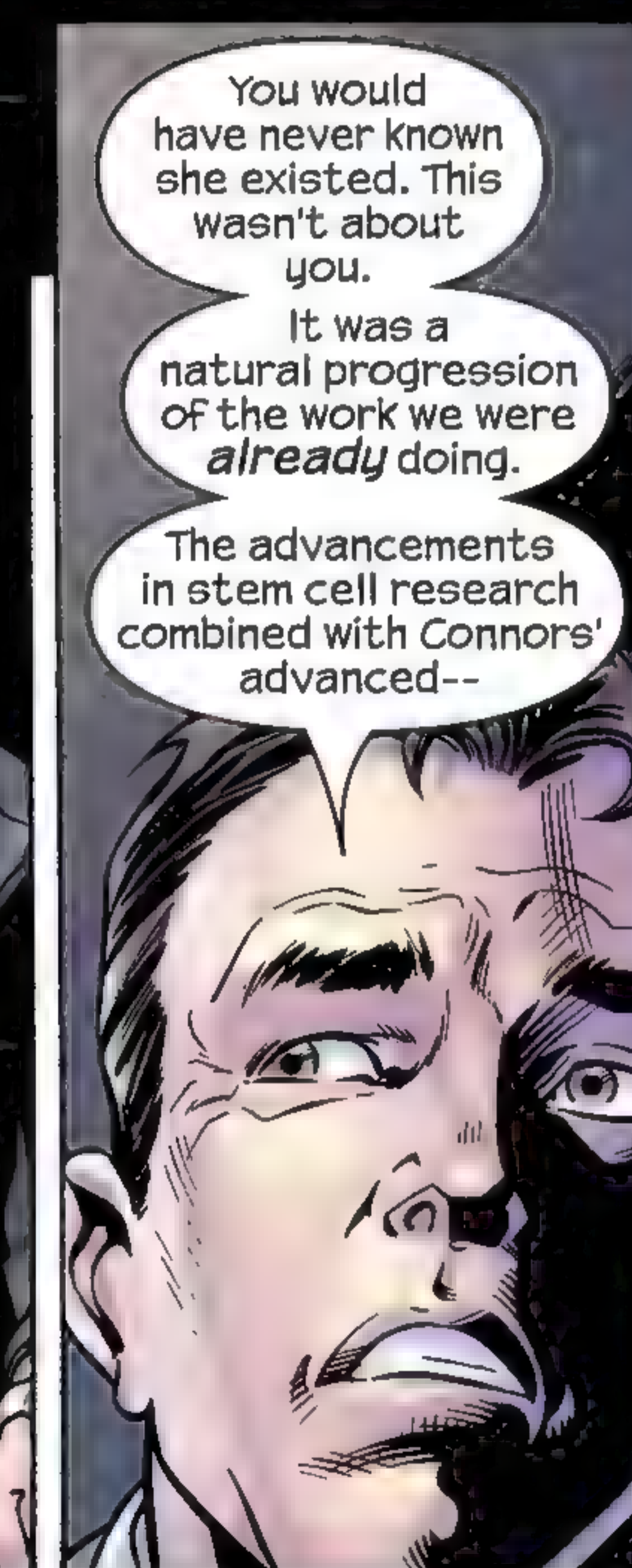


Where've you been, Richard?

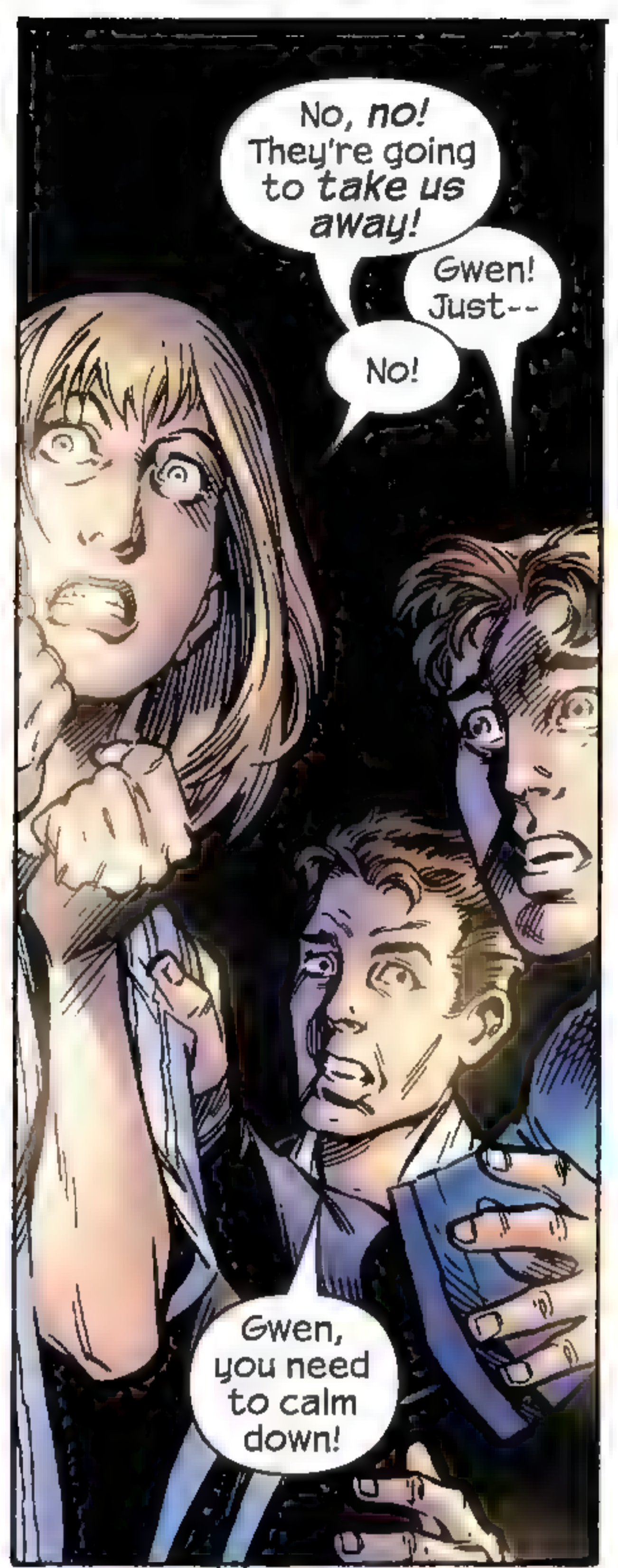
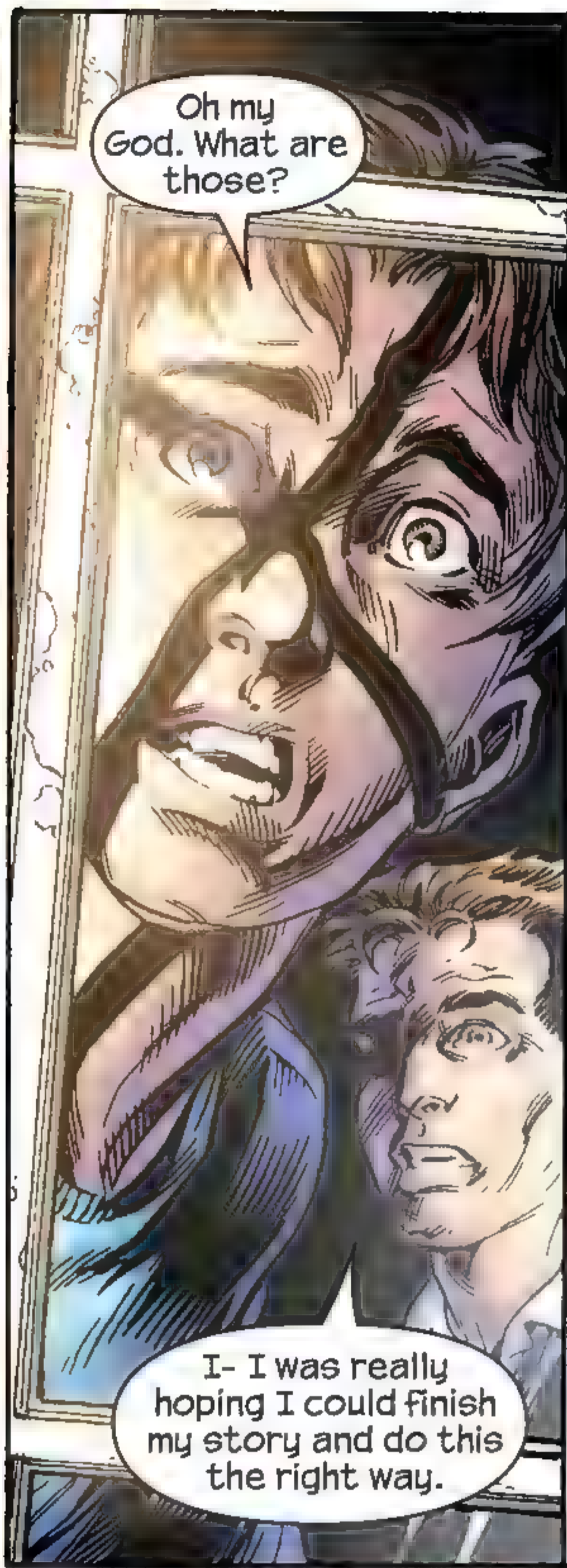
I- I really can't say.



Stay away from him!!

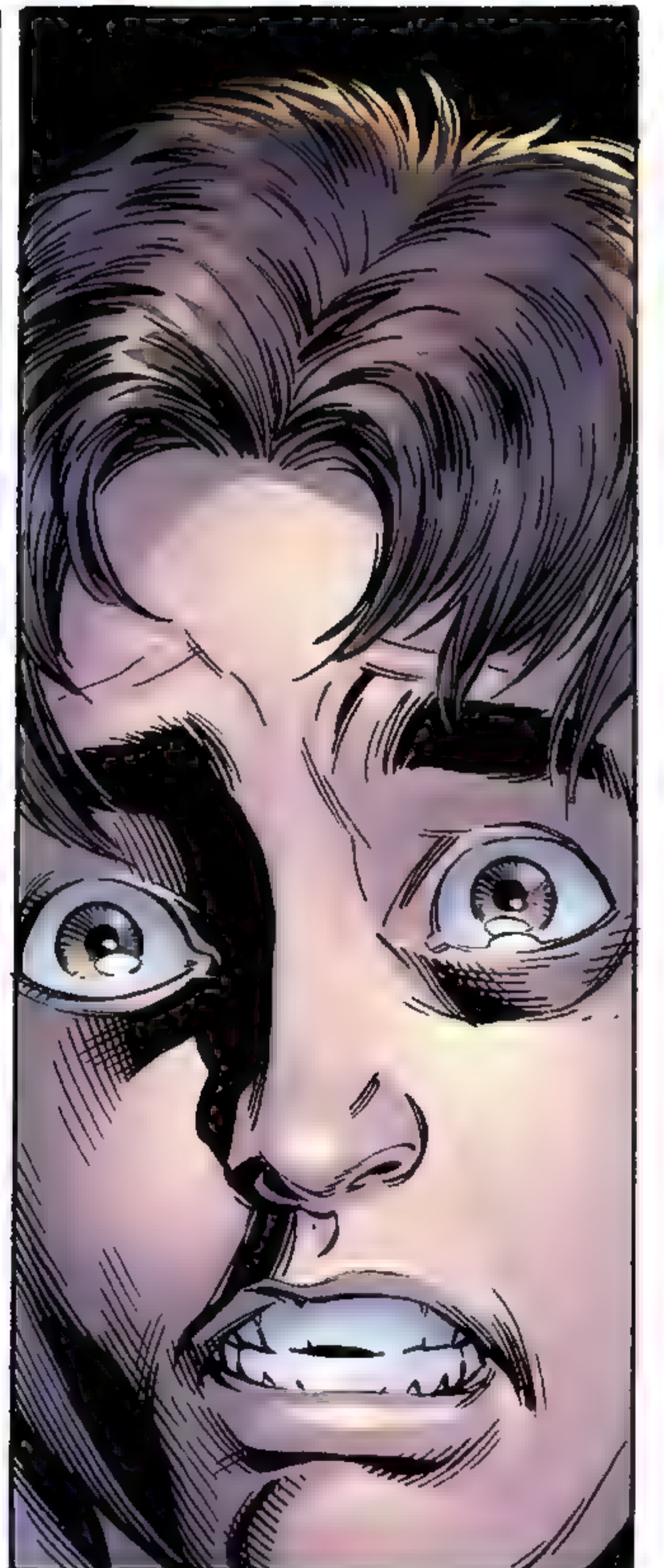


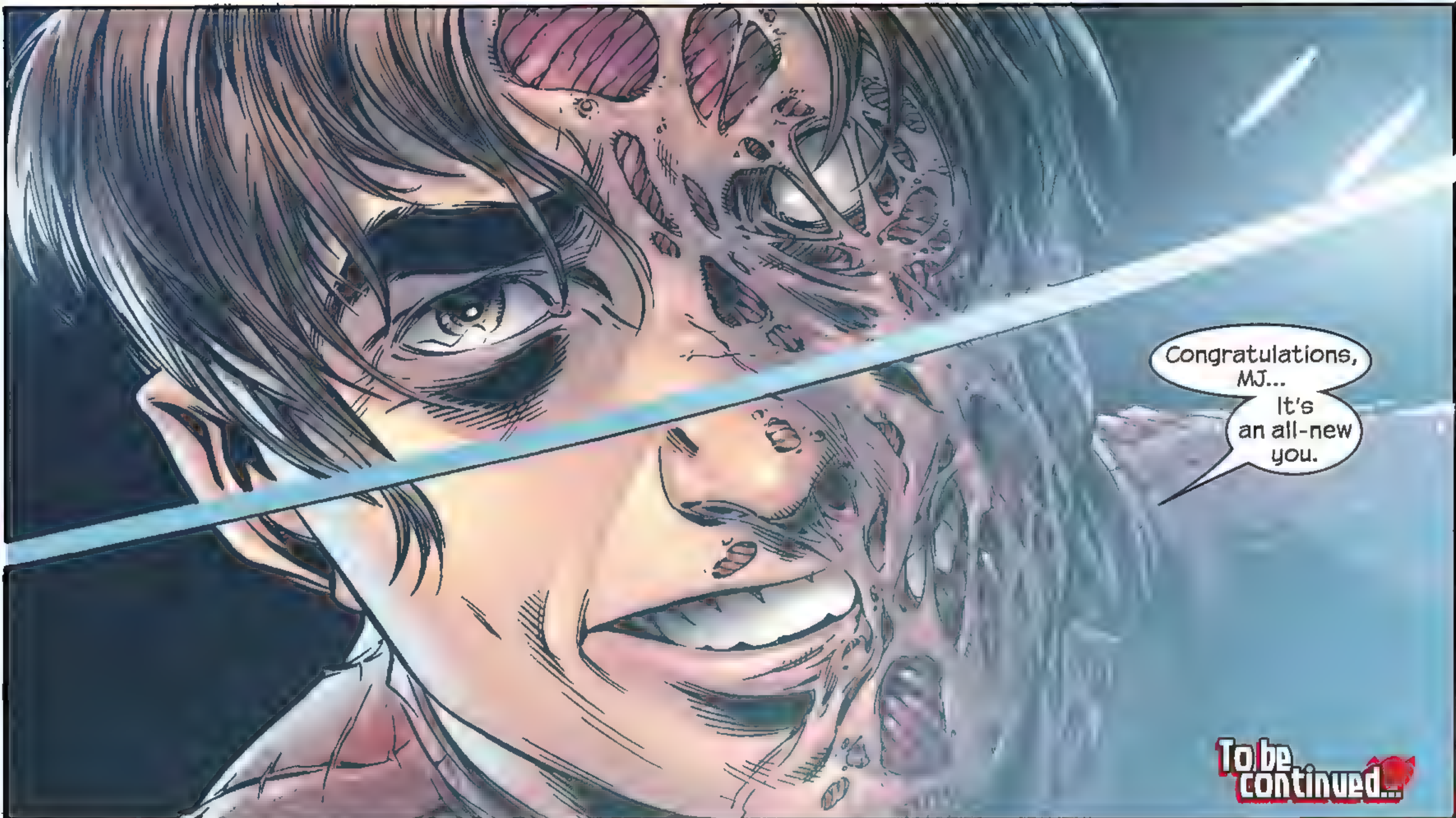
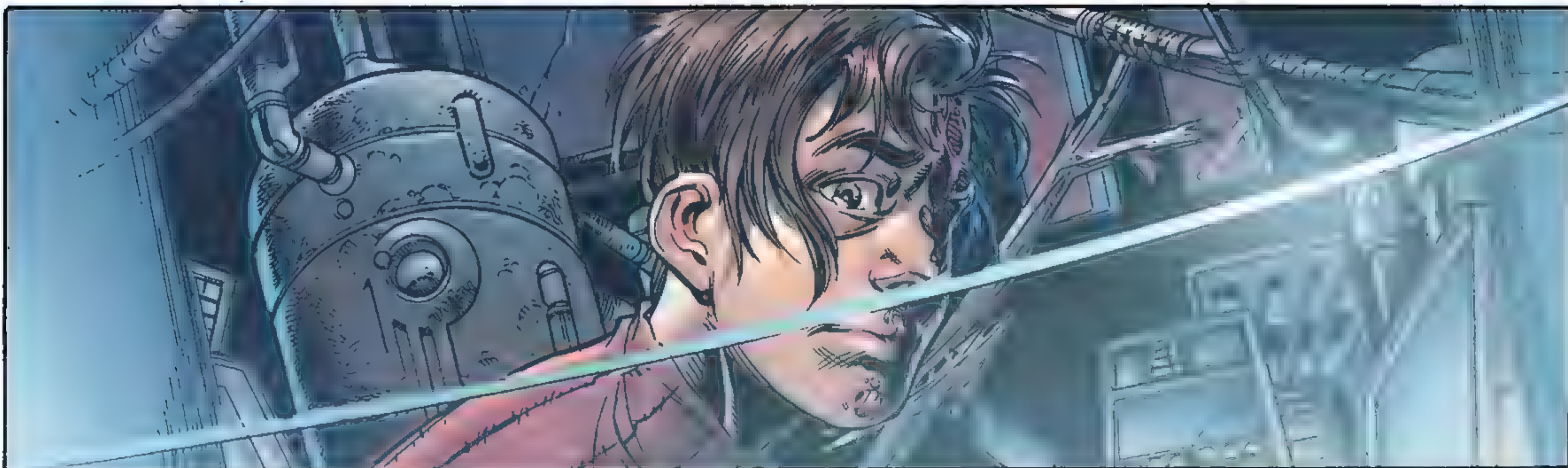
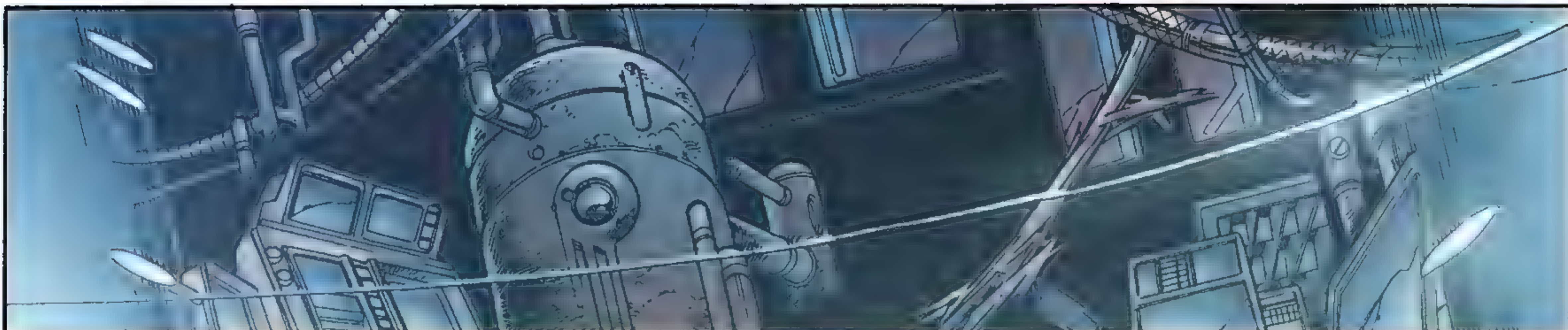




Noooo!!!

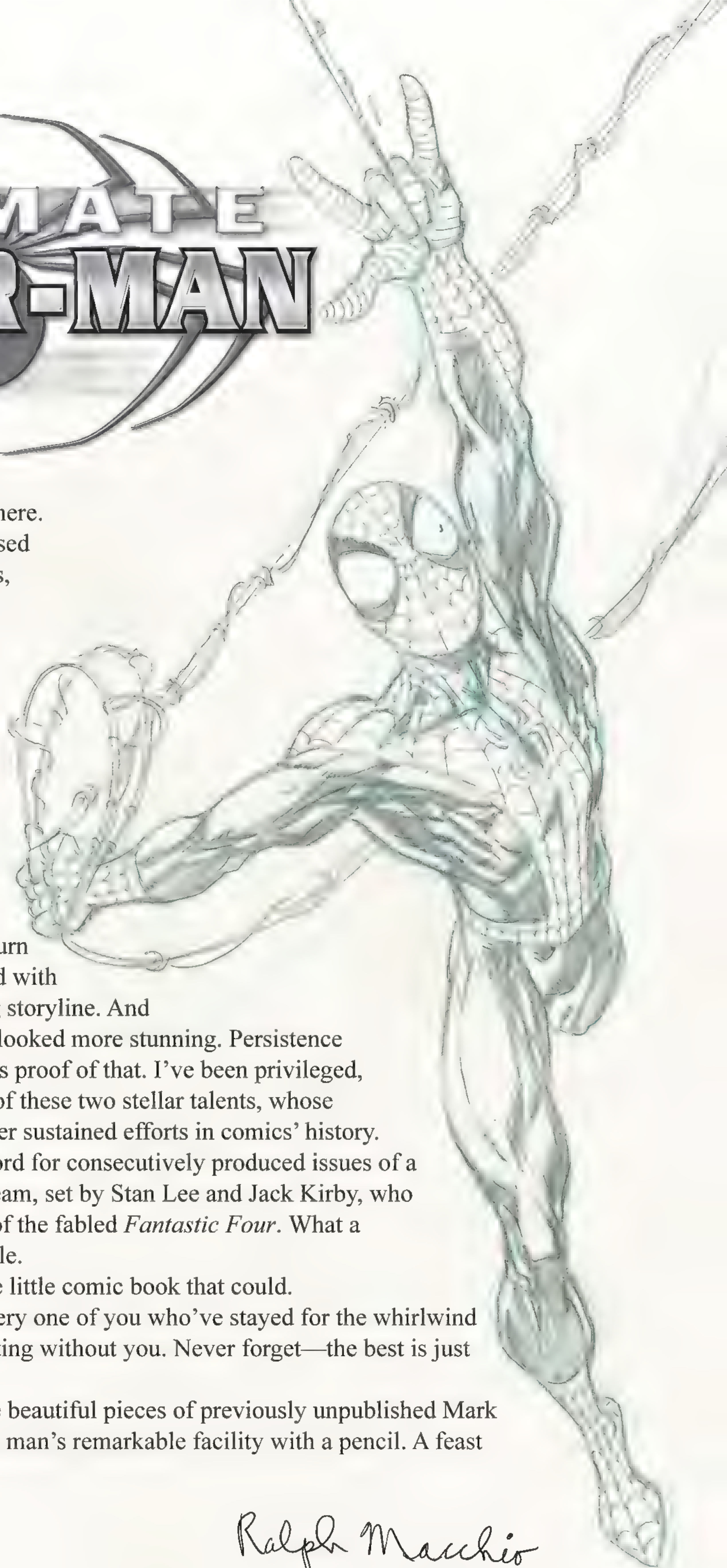






**To be
continued...**

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN



Bet'cha didn't think we'd still be here. A lot of folks didn't. Some dismissed us with a wave of the hand. Others, intrigued by this wondrous re-imagining of the web-spinner's seminal myth, stuck around. If you're reading this, you're one of the latter and we're proud to have you along as we catch our collective breath and brace ourselves for the next hundred-issue marathon.

As you can tell from reading this very special issue, writer Brian Bendis continues to turn comic book convention on its head with perhaps his boldest, most amazing storyline. And Mark Bagley's artwork has never looked more stunning. Persistence pays off, and this landmark book is proof of that. I've been privileged, as editor, to oversee the blending of these two stellar talents, whose fusion has produced one of the finer sustained efforts in comics' history. They'll shortly be passing the record for consecutively produced issues of a Marvel comic done by the same team, set by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, who produced 102 consecutive issues of the fabled *Fantastic Four*. What a milestone for this team and this title.

Ultimate Spider-Man: The little comic book that could.

My thanks to each and every one of you who've stayed for the whirlwind ride. We wouldn't be here celebrating without you. Never forget—the best is just ahead.

Also, just ahead, are some beautiful pieces of previously unpublished Mark Bagley artwork that showcase this man's remarkable facility with a pencil. A feast for the eye. Enjoy...

Ralph Macchio
Ralph Macchio



This was originally intended as the cover to issue 62—the issue in which Gwen Stacy dies. At some point in the planning stages, we thought the “Carnage” arc was going to run six issues, so Mark penciled six covers. But the story was actually only five—so one of the covers had to go, and this one gave away more of the shock ending than the others...



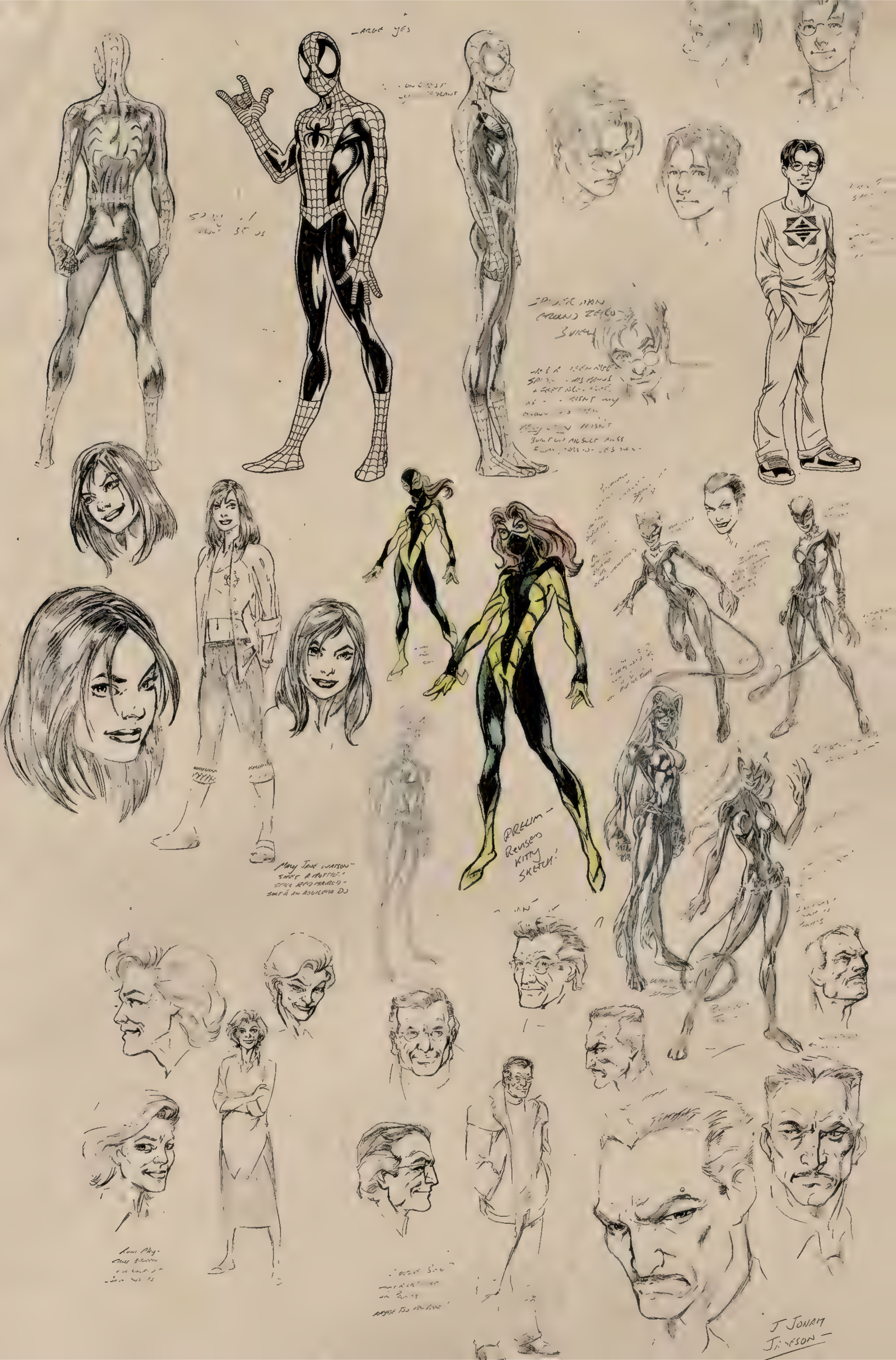
This was originally intended as the first page of issue 60. Mark drew this great shot of the Lizard...then reread the script and realized that wasn't what the script called for at all. Mark redrew the page—this time with the Lizard jumping at the reader—but he always liked this page!

These next couple pages are just some random covers Mark put together for us to use as needed...but we never got around to using them, and it seemed like a real shame to leave them unseen!



On the next few pages, check out this amazing assortment of Mark's character designs for the series!







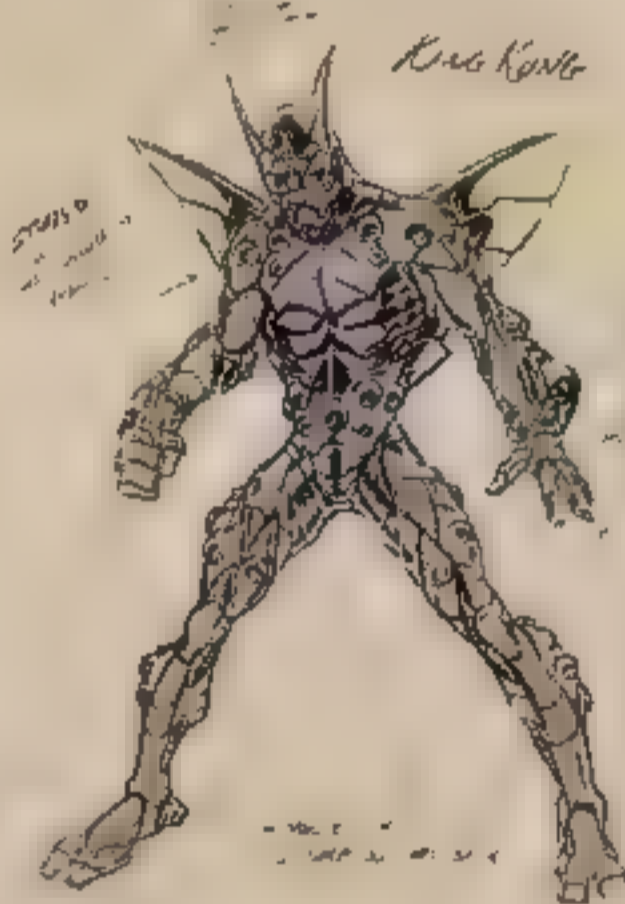
ULT
Hulk Hogan -

ULT
Scorpion -
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ULT
Vulture -

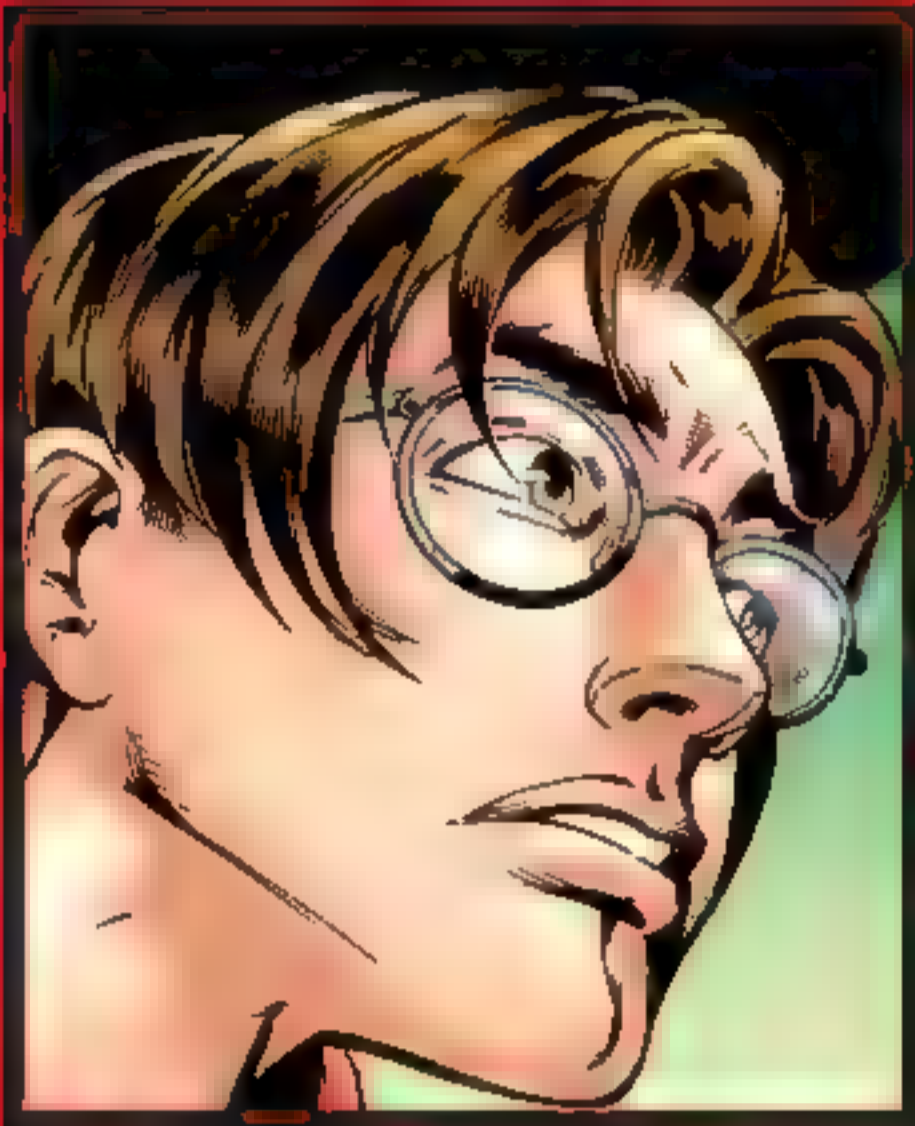
ULT
Vulture -



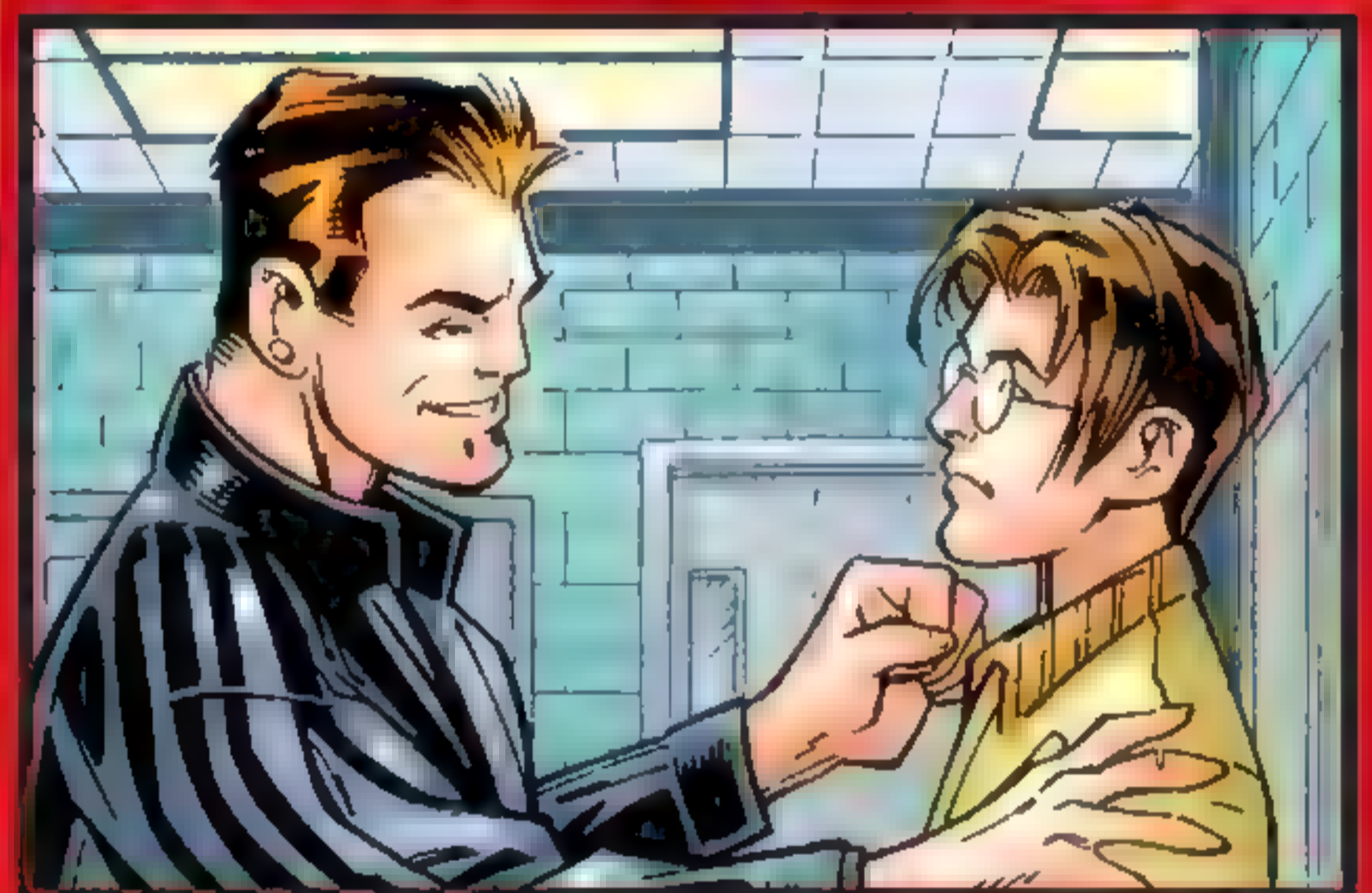
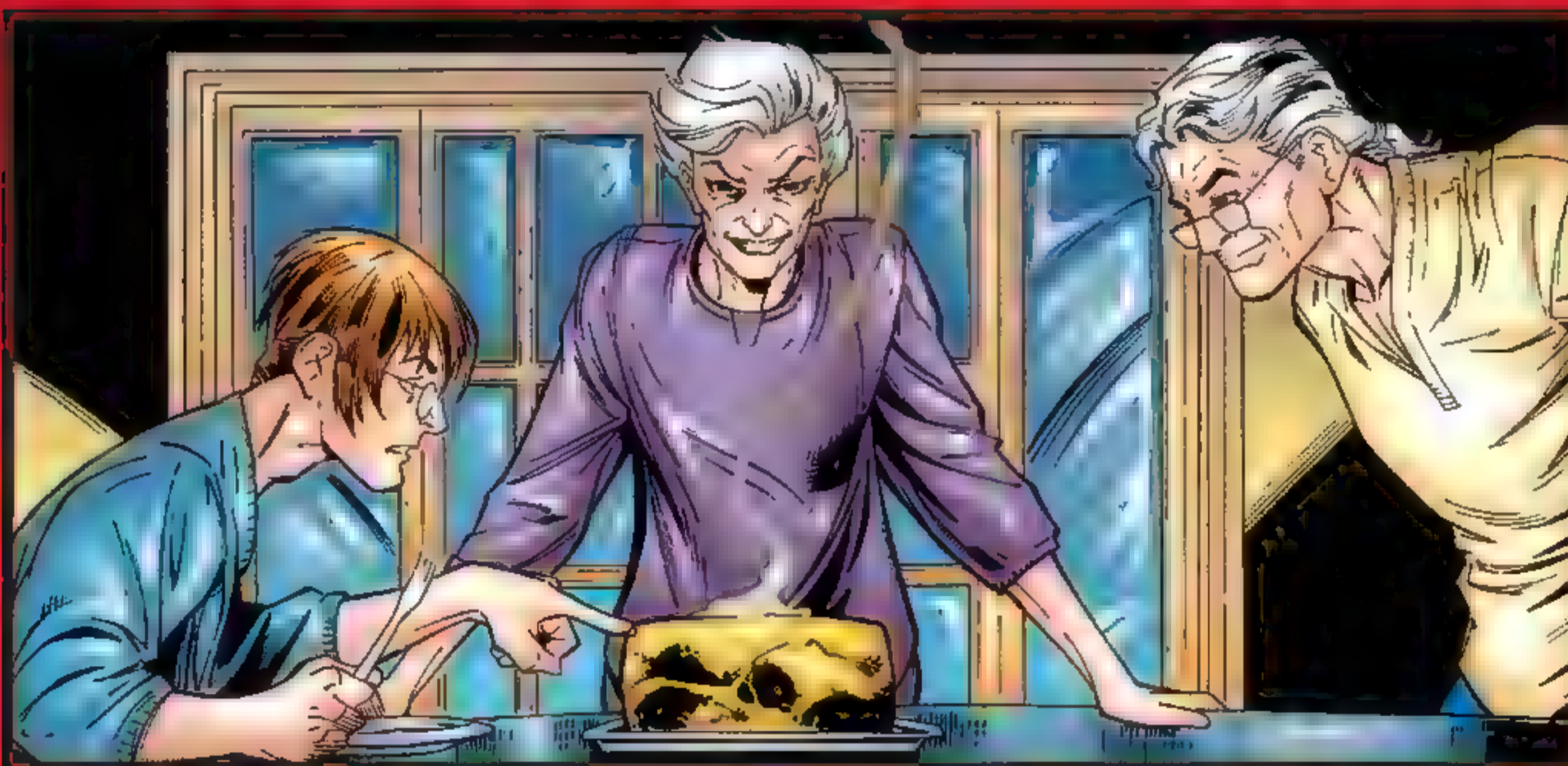
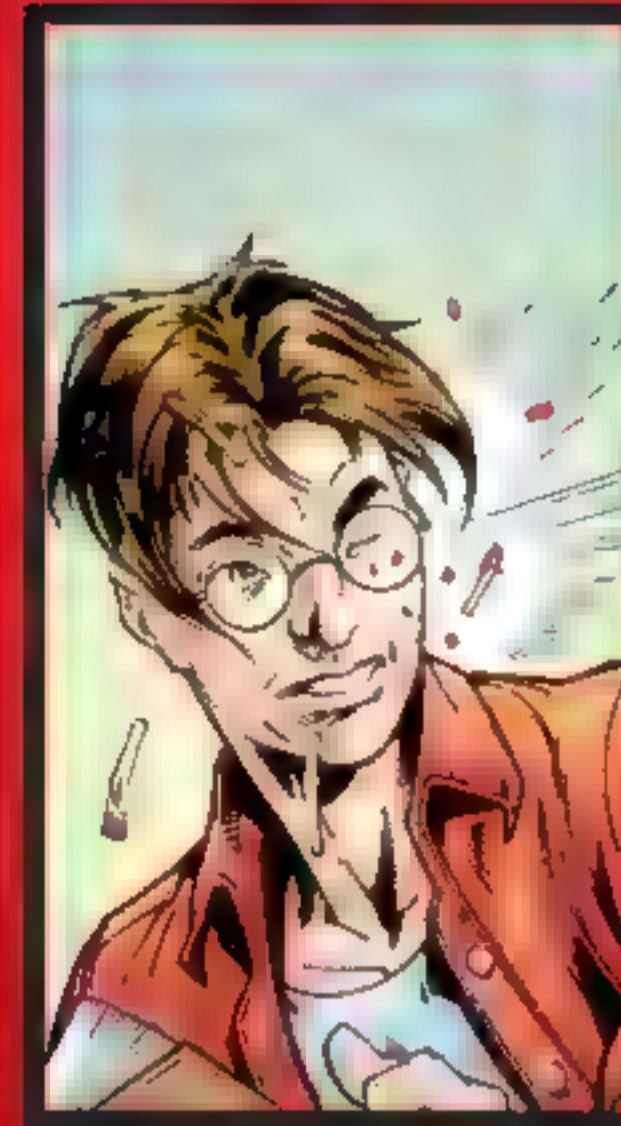


ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN SAGA

By John Barber
Based on comics by
Brian Michael Bendis
and **Mark Bagley**
with Trevor Hairsine
and Mark Brooks



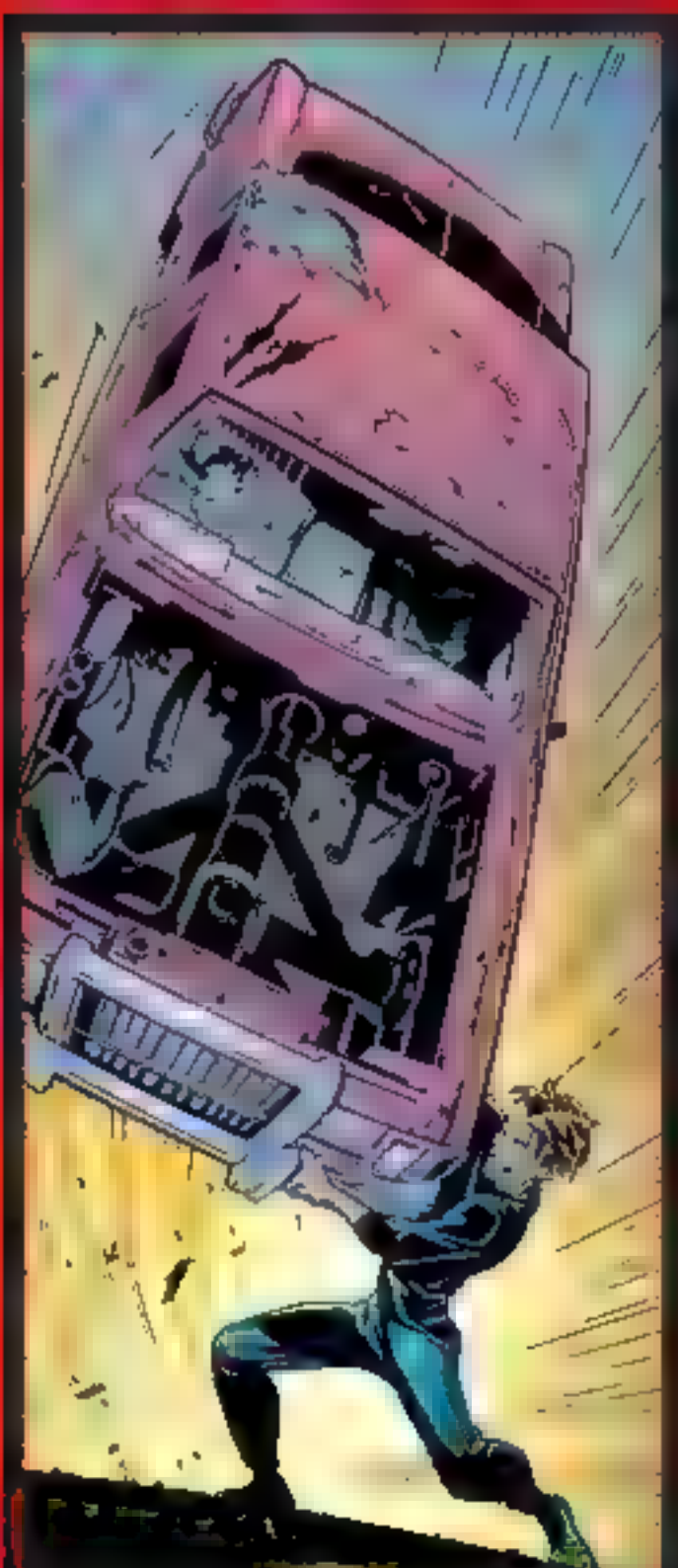
Peter Parker is your run-of-the-mill student at Midtown High—nerdy and unpopular, but hardly remarkable. When he isn't being picked on by jocks like Flash Thompson and Kong, he's got his head buried in a science book.



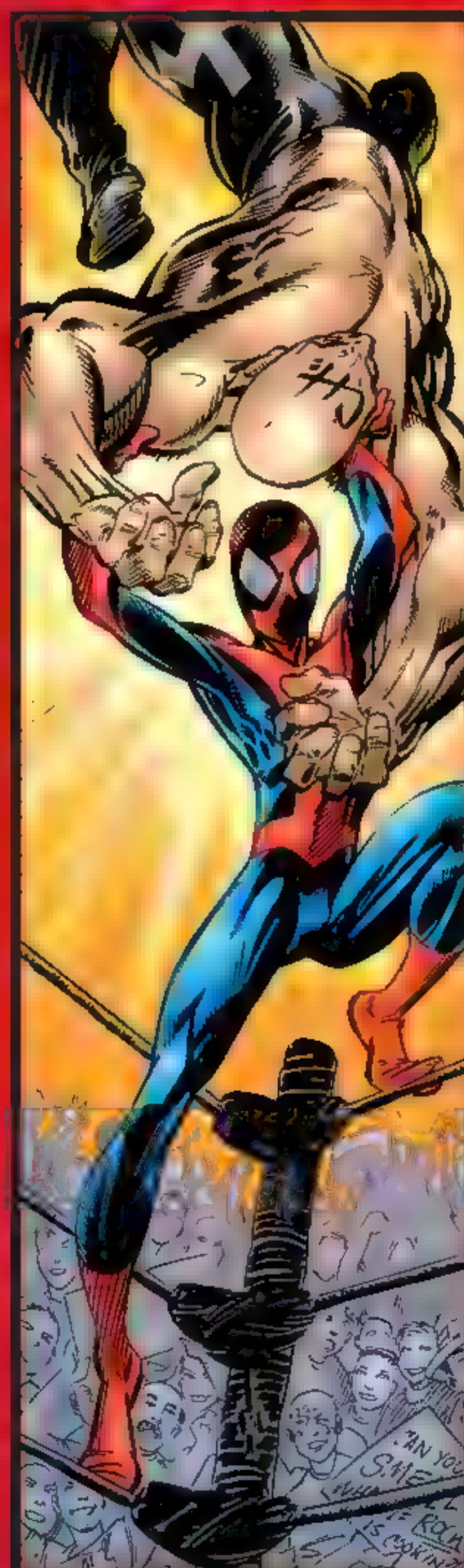
Peter's parents died when he was young, and he's been raised by his loving Aunt May and Uncle Ben. Peter's only real friends are Mary Jane Watson, a friend from childhood, and Harry Osborn, son of billionaire industrialist Norman Osborn.



At a field trip to Osborne Industries, a spider—genetically altered by something called the Oz Formula—bites Peter on the hand.



It doesn't take long for Peter to realize that this bite has changed his own genetic make-up, giving him the proportionate strength, speed, and agility of a spider! He also learns he can stick to walls and has a precognitive ability that warns him of impending danger (he calls this his "spider-sense").

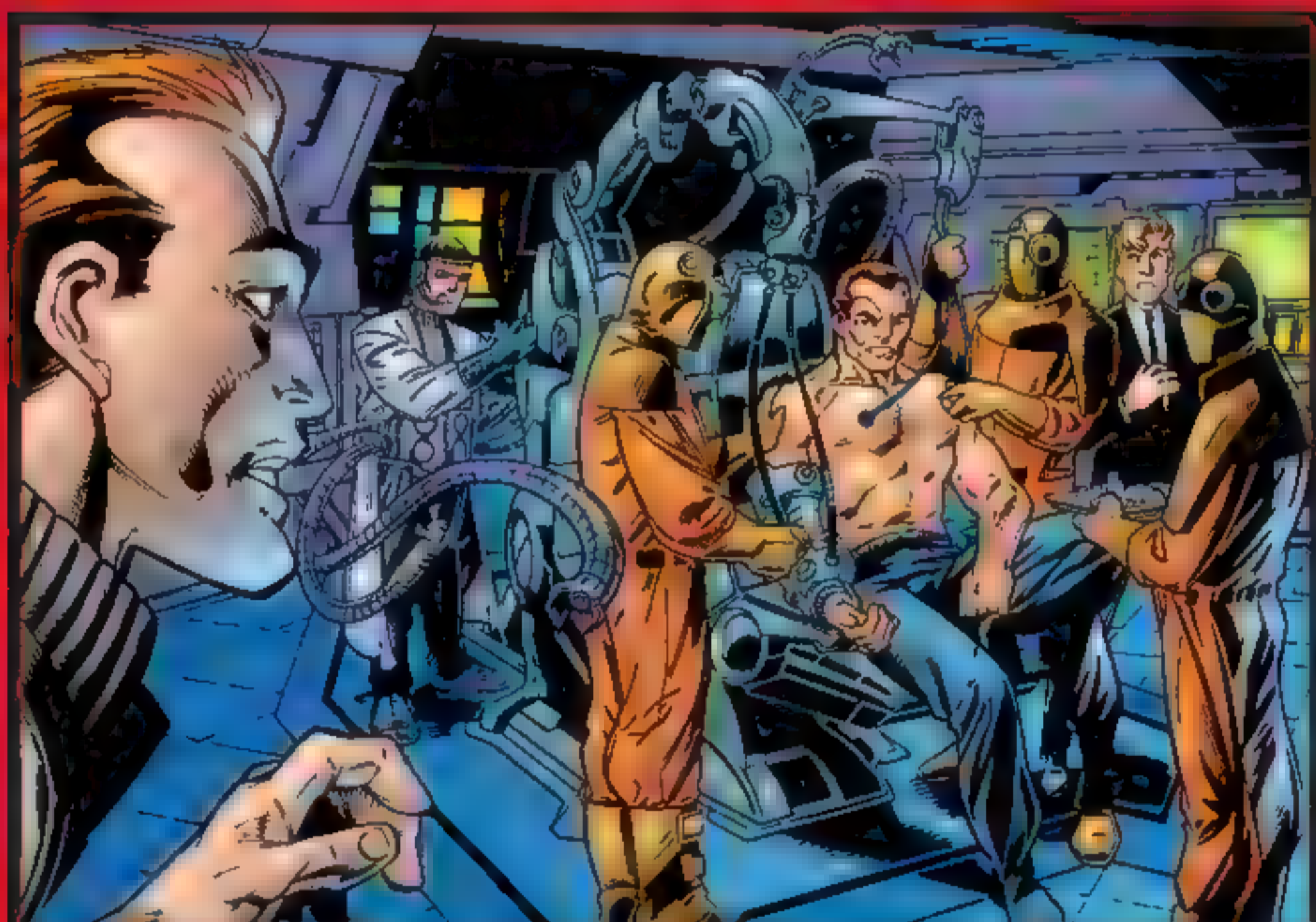


Peter uses his newfound powers to make money and impress his friends. Overnight, he changes from a lonely loser to a masked wrestler called "Spider-Man"! But this newfound success and confidence goes to Peter's head.



One day, Peter lets a purse-snatcher get away when it would've been easy to stop him. This incident proves to be the pivotal event in Peter's young life...as Peter returns home to find his Uncle Ben dead—murdered in a attempted break-in! Peter dons his wrestling outfit and tracks down the killer—only to find it's the very same purse-snatcher he'd let escape!

It is then that Peter truly learns his fateful lesson: with great power, there must also come—great responsibility!



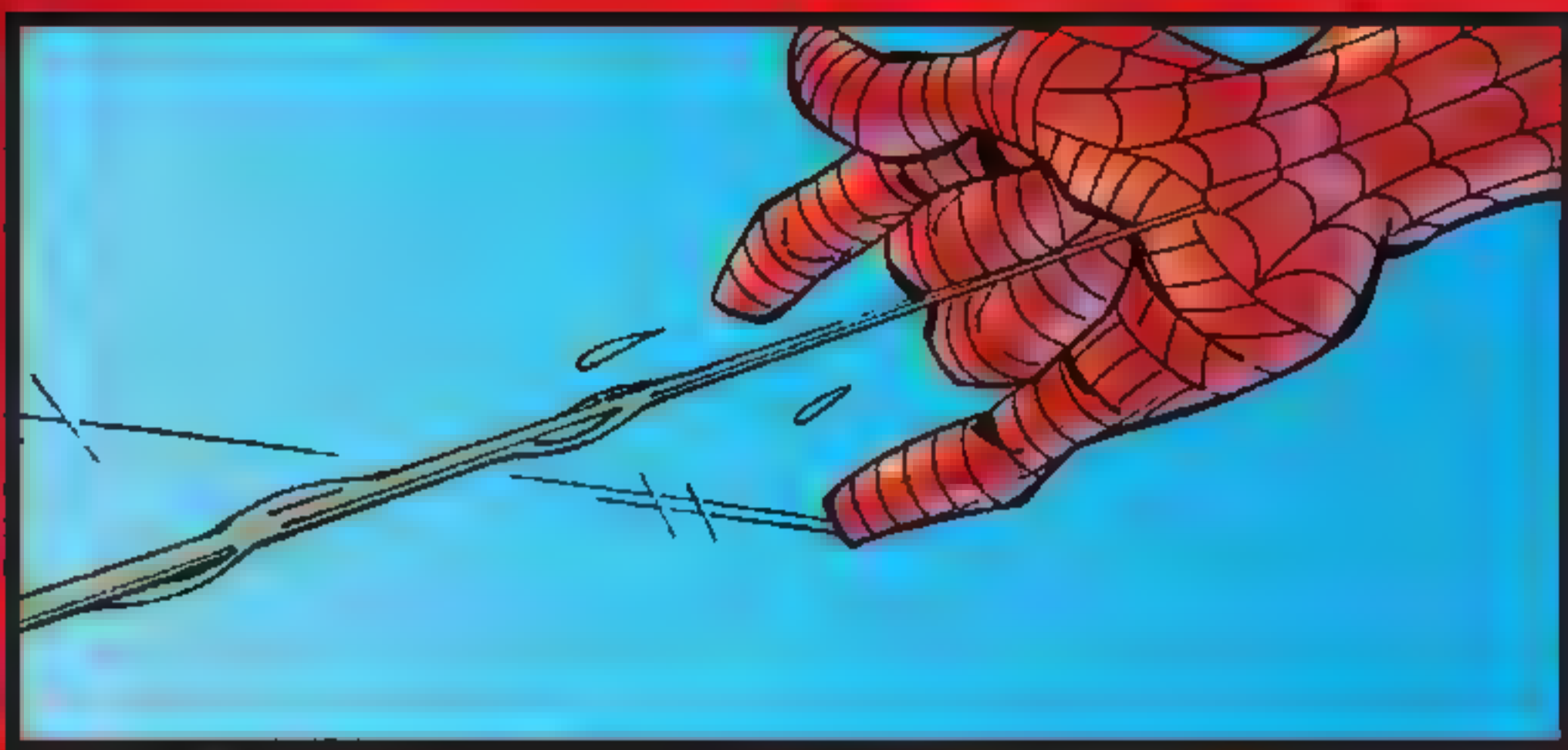
But Peter's trials are far from over. Norman Osborn has been monitoring Peter since the moment the spider bit him. Seeing the boy's extraordinary transformation, Norman wants that power for himself...so with the help of his chief scientist, Dr. Otto Octavius, Norman pushes his own family away and injects himself with the Oz Formula. The results destroy the lab...and Norman is nowhere to be found...

Soon after, Norman's home is razed and his wife is killed. When Norman reappears at Midtown High, searching for Peter (who he blames for his new condition), he is Norman no more. Now he is...the Green Goblin!

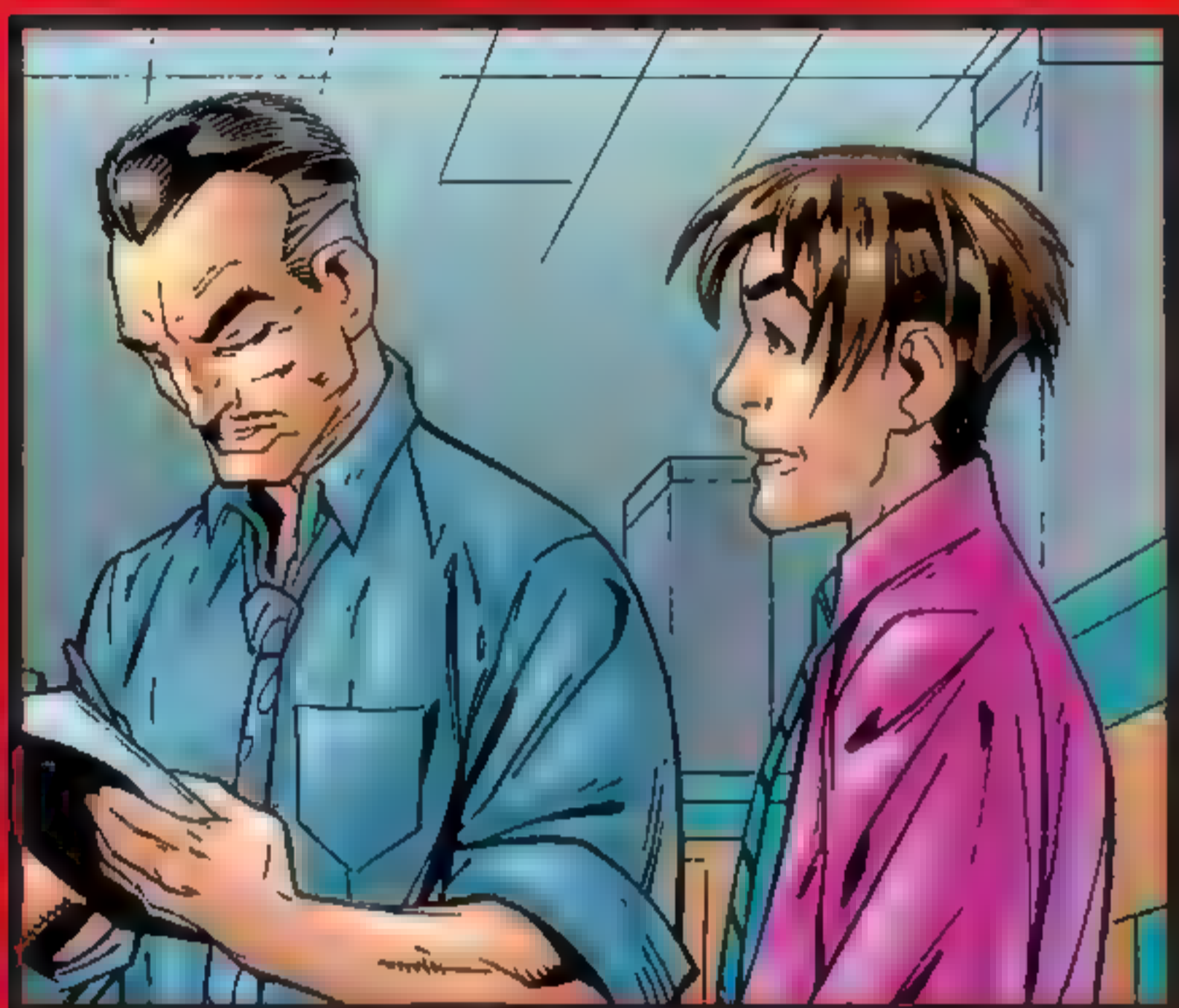




The ensuing fight leaves Peter confused and the Goblin missing—and announces to the world the existence of Spider-Man!



It also gives Peter a chance to test his web-shooters! Based on a principle devised by Peter's father—an accomplished scientist—these mechanical devices grant Spider-Man yet another power of the spider!

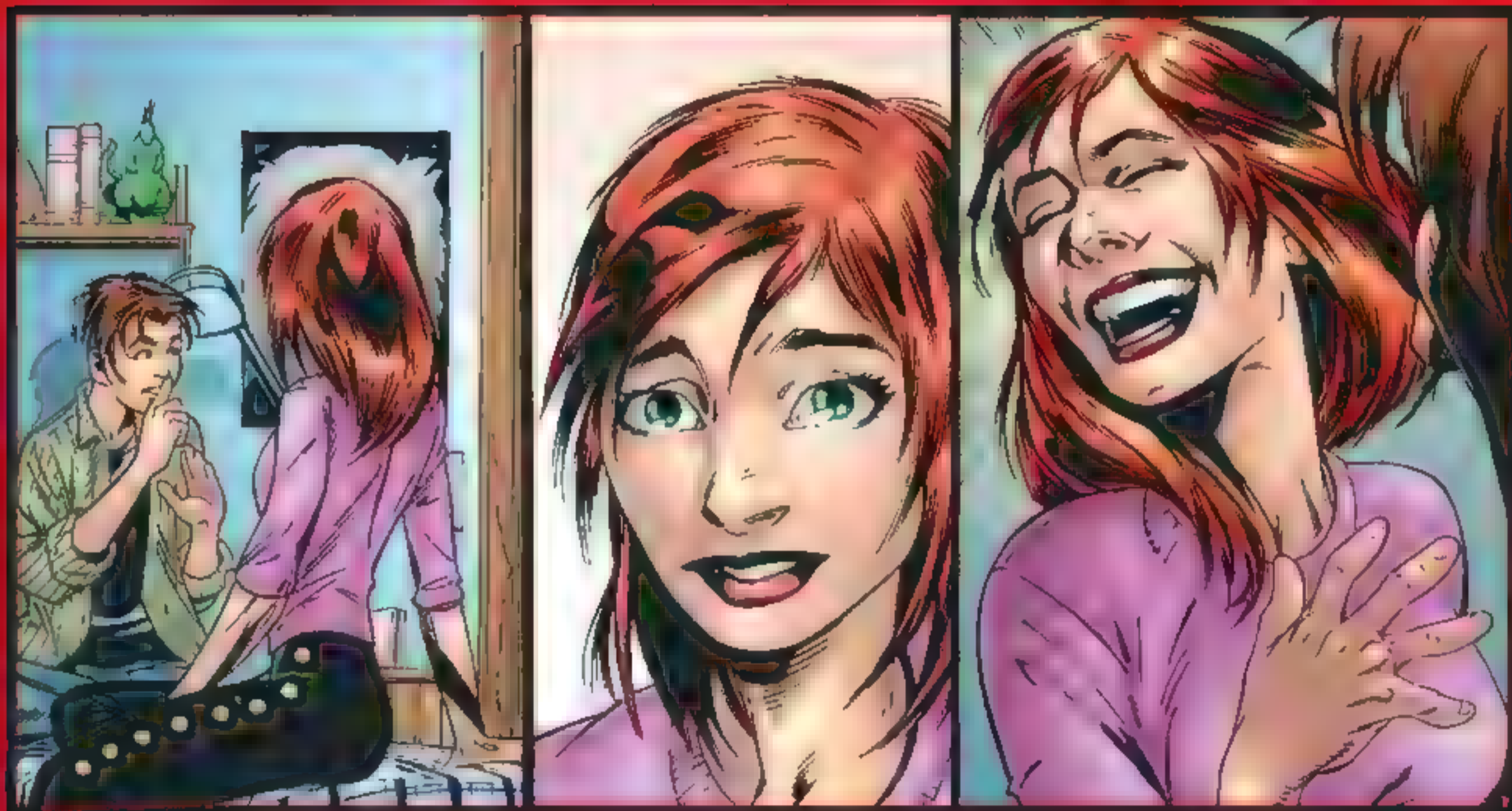


Attempting to raise money to help his now-widowed Aunt May, Peter tries to sell some photos of himself as Spidey. At the *Daily Bugle* newspaper, he meets editor J. Jonah Jameson—who offers Peter the chance to become the Bugle's webmaster!

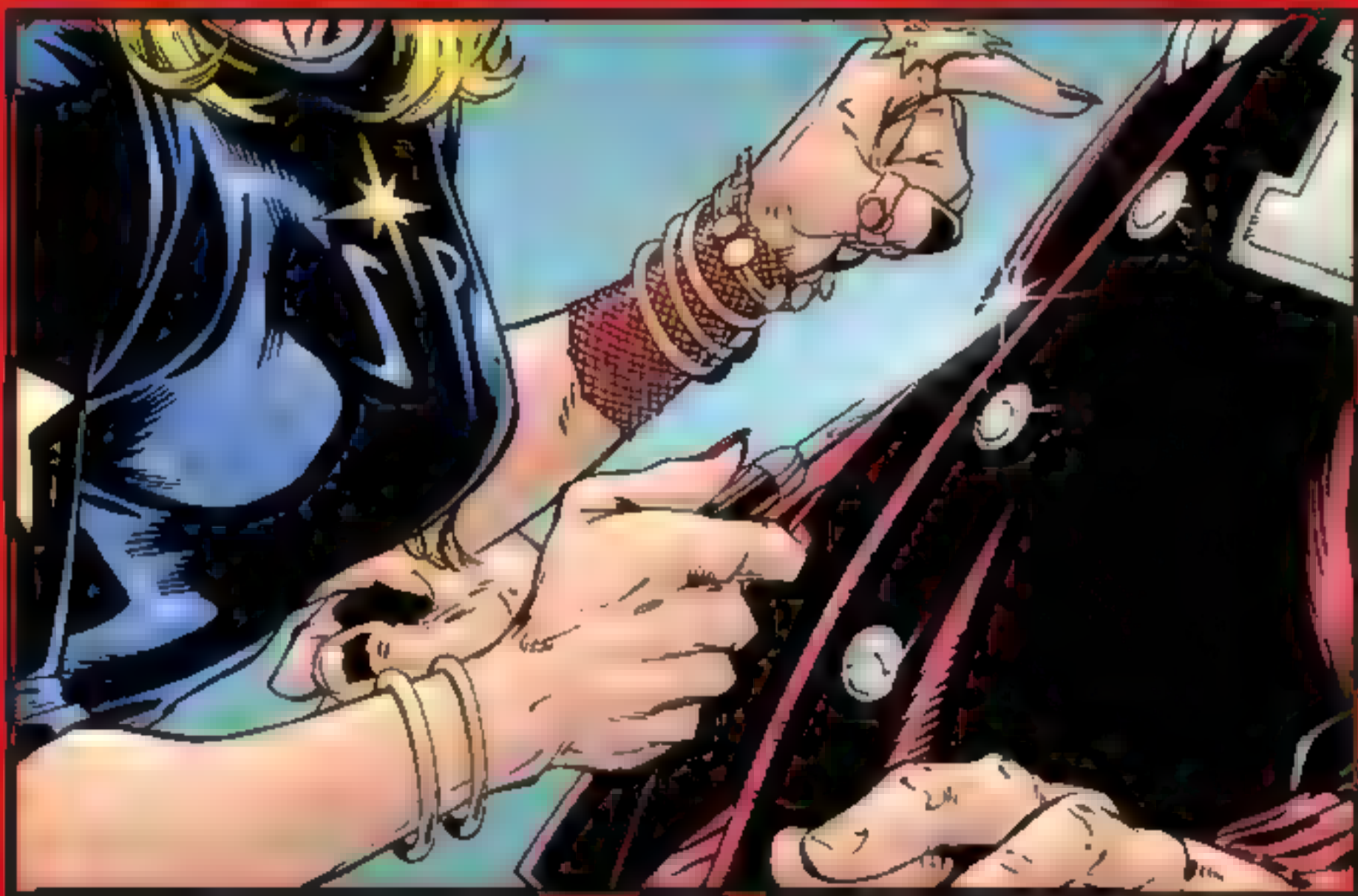
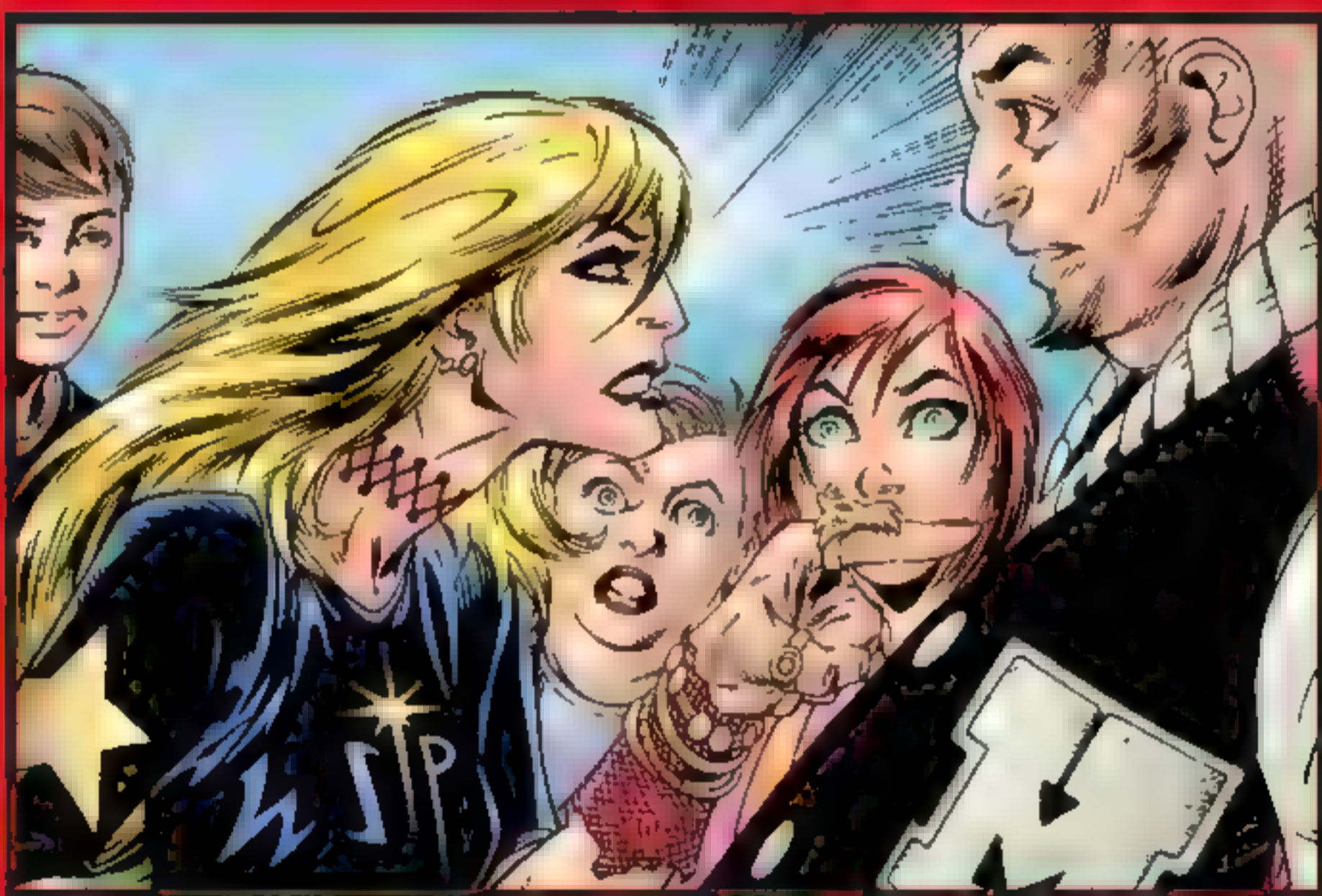


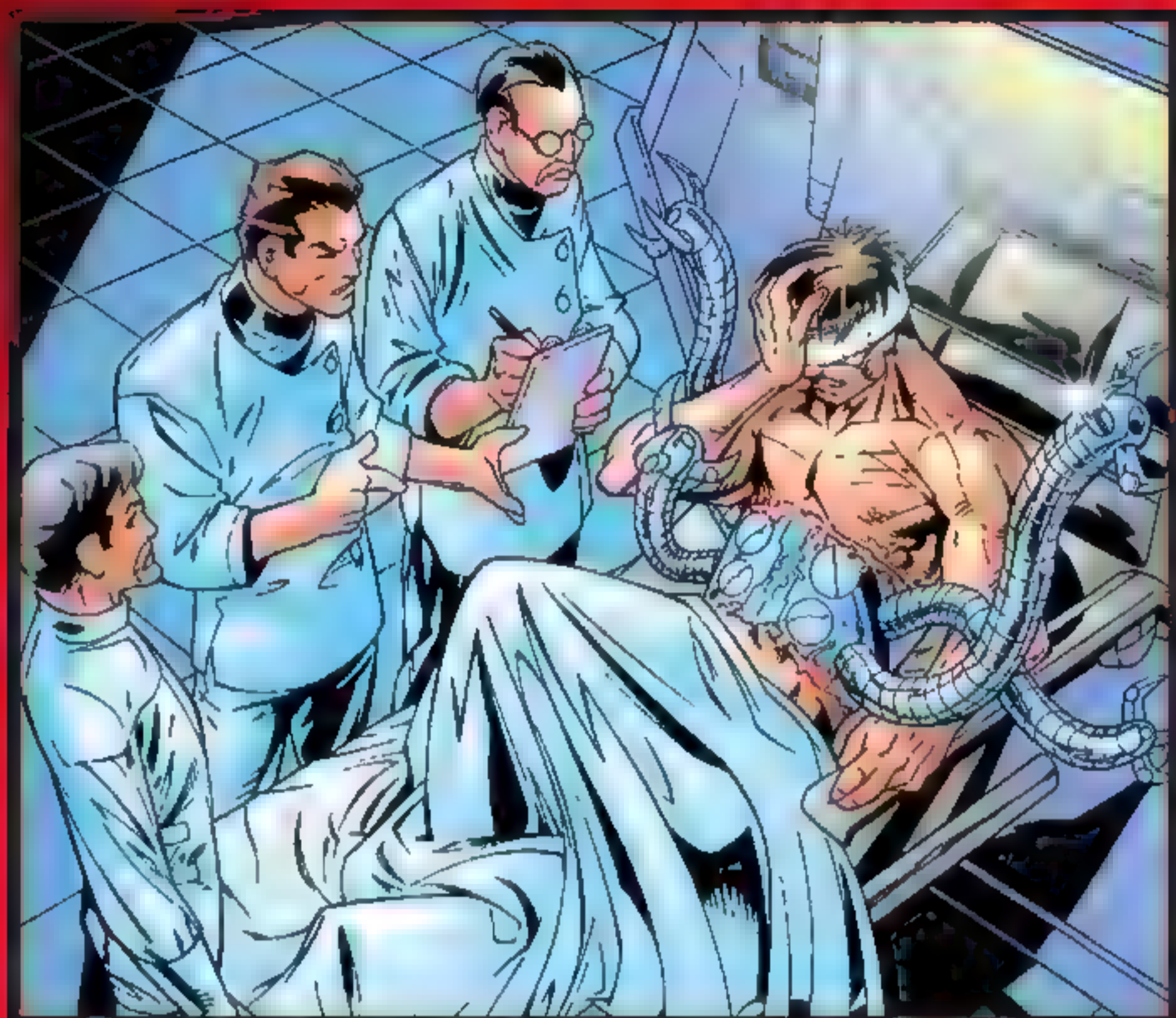
Peter dives into his role, and starts learning more about the world he now lives in—the world of larger-than-life super-criminals...and they don't come any larger than the head of New York's underworld, the Kingpin of Crime, Wilson Fisk!

Peter manages to gather enough evidence to force Fisk out of the country. Now Peter has two villains he's made into mortal enemies...but only one friend to share his secret life...

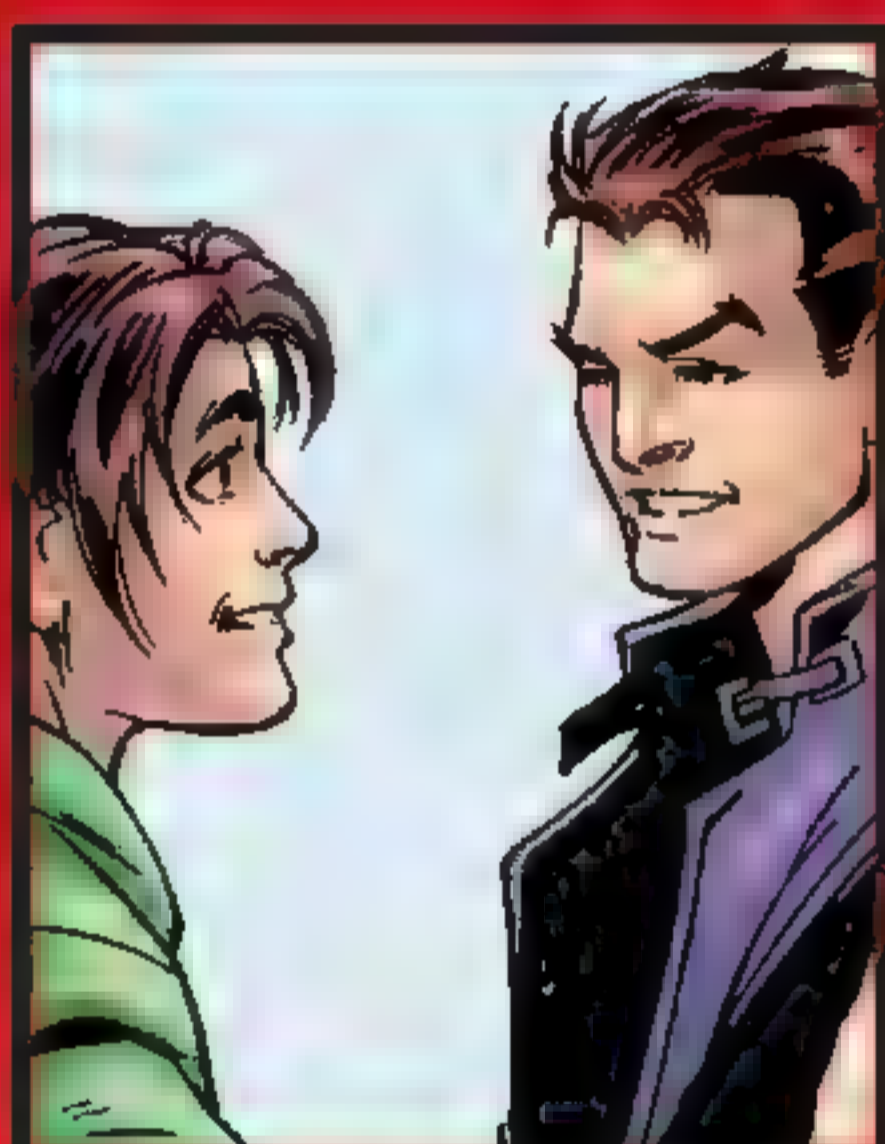
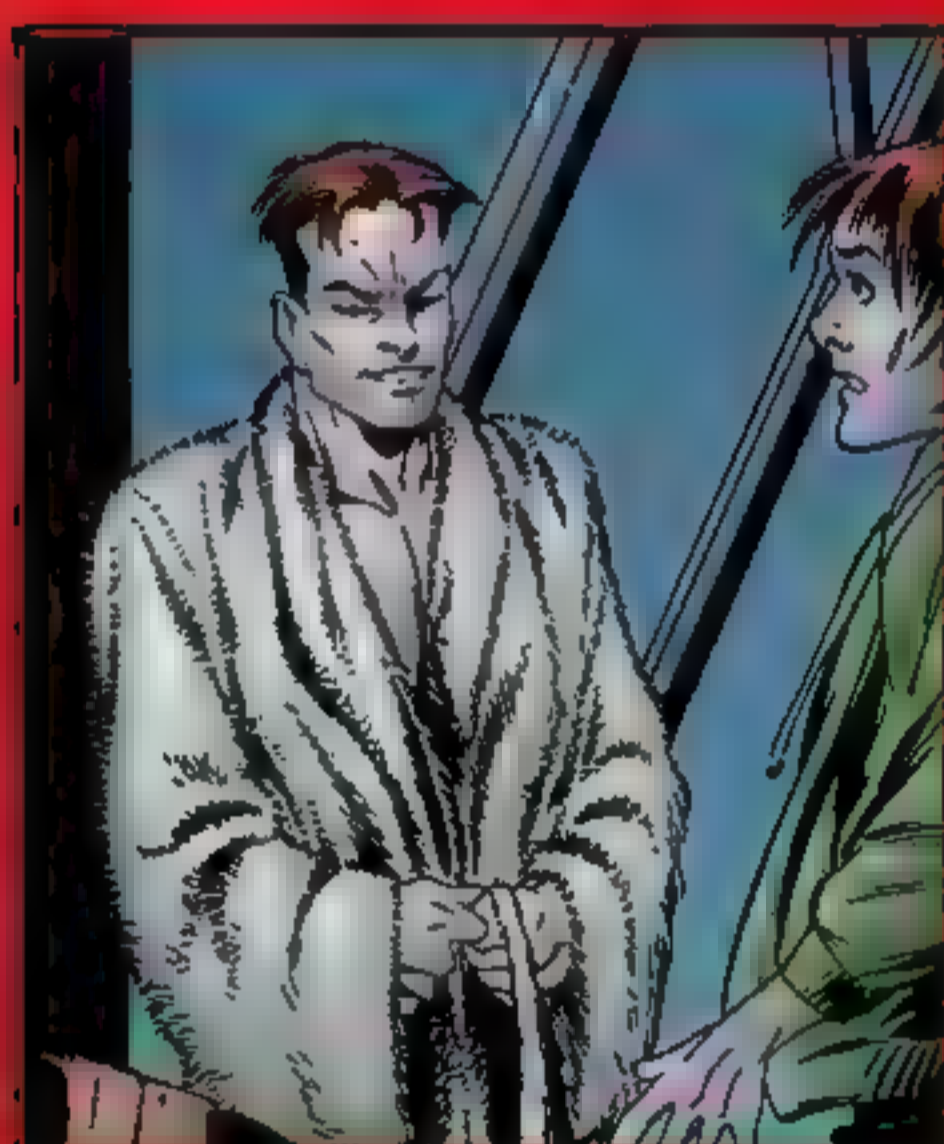


MJ doesn't believe him at first, but when Peter shows her his powers, she becomes his girlfriend and confidant...but a big question mark comes Peter's way, in the form of Gwen Stacy, daughter of the NYPD's Captain Stacy. Gwen is a beautiful and troubled girl who transfers to Midtown and—on her first day—pulls a knife on Kong when he threatens Peter! Peter is impressed...

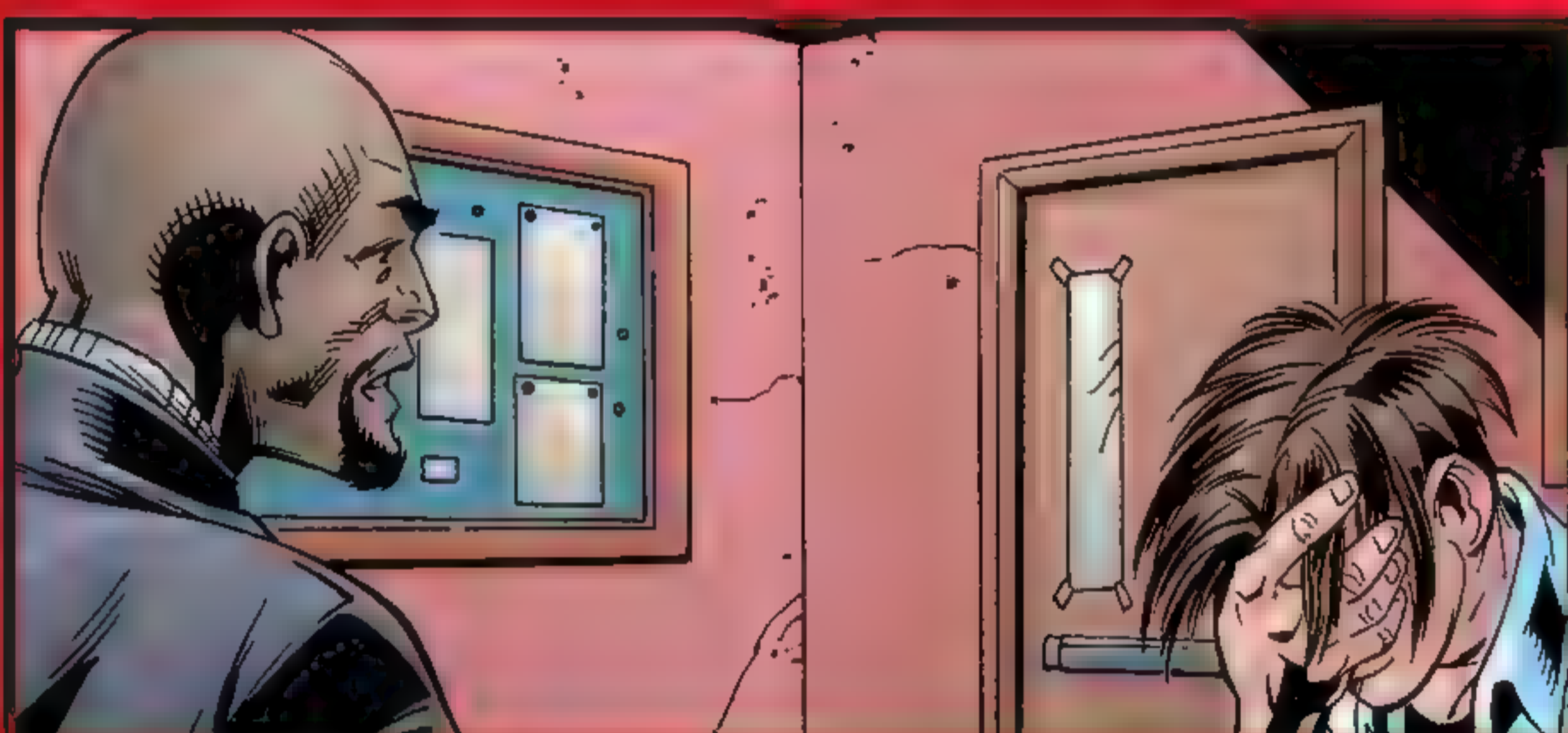




Less impressed is Norman Osborn's chief scientist, Otto Octavius, who has survived Norman's transformation—with some complications. Seeking revenge for his mutilation, Octavius—dubbed Doctor Octopus—attacks everyone who has any connection to the events that caused the accident. Of course, Spider-Man can't sit back and let the innocent (and not-so-innocent) die.



Peter manages to bring Doc Ock to justice, just in time for Harry to return to Midtown... Unfortunately, Harry's father also returns—now seemingly in control of his transformations into the Goblin, well aware of Peter's dual identity...and stark raving mad. Norman politely asks for Peter's help in his future plans...



But it turns out someone else knows Peter and Norman's secrets—namely America's top spy, Nick Fury—head of the espionage group, S.H.I.E.L.D.

Fury wants Peter to pretend to help Norman, in reality gathering enough evidence for Fury to arrest him. Instead, Peter tries to take Norman down himself—and nearly gets MJ killed in the process.

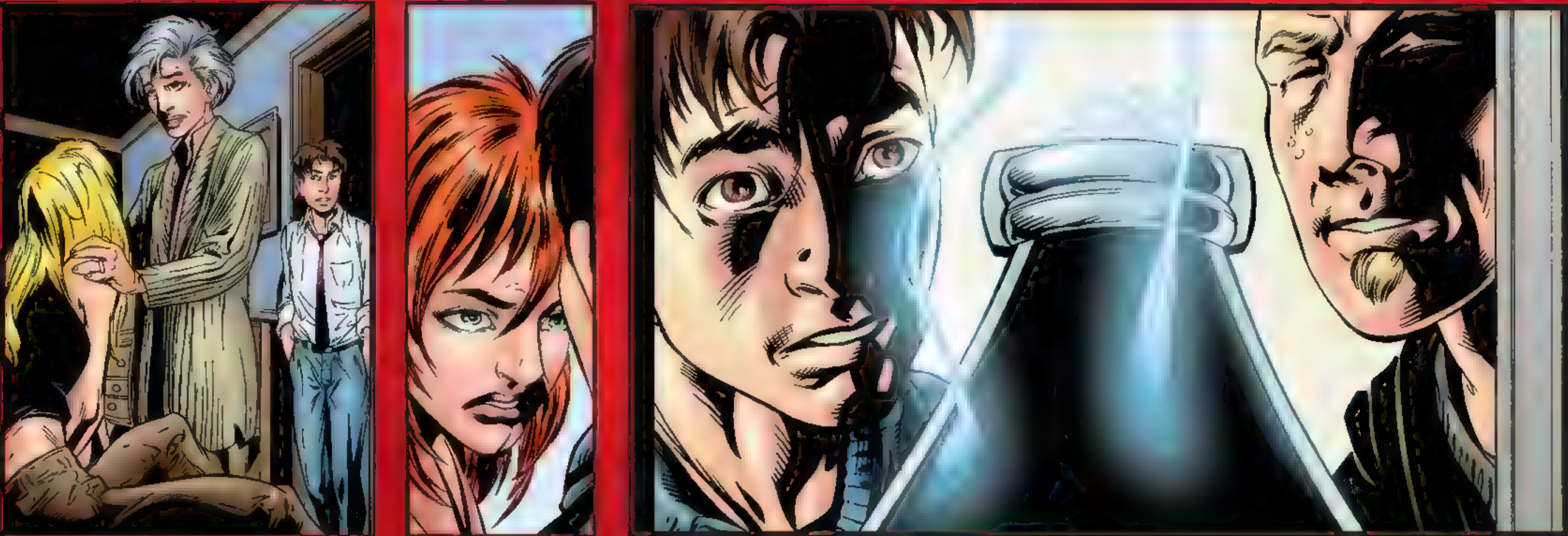


But as Norman overdoses on Oz and tries to kill Peter and MJ, it's Harry who puts an end to his father's plan.

Norman and Harry are taken into S.H.I.E.L.D. custody, and Peter is left with a dawning awareness of the dangers of his new life. Nothing drives this home more than what happens to Captain Stacy while trying to apprehend a criminal posing as Spider-Man....



Peter confronts the imposter, and in his rage nearly crosses a line there's no walking away from...but Peter stops himself just in time.



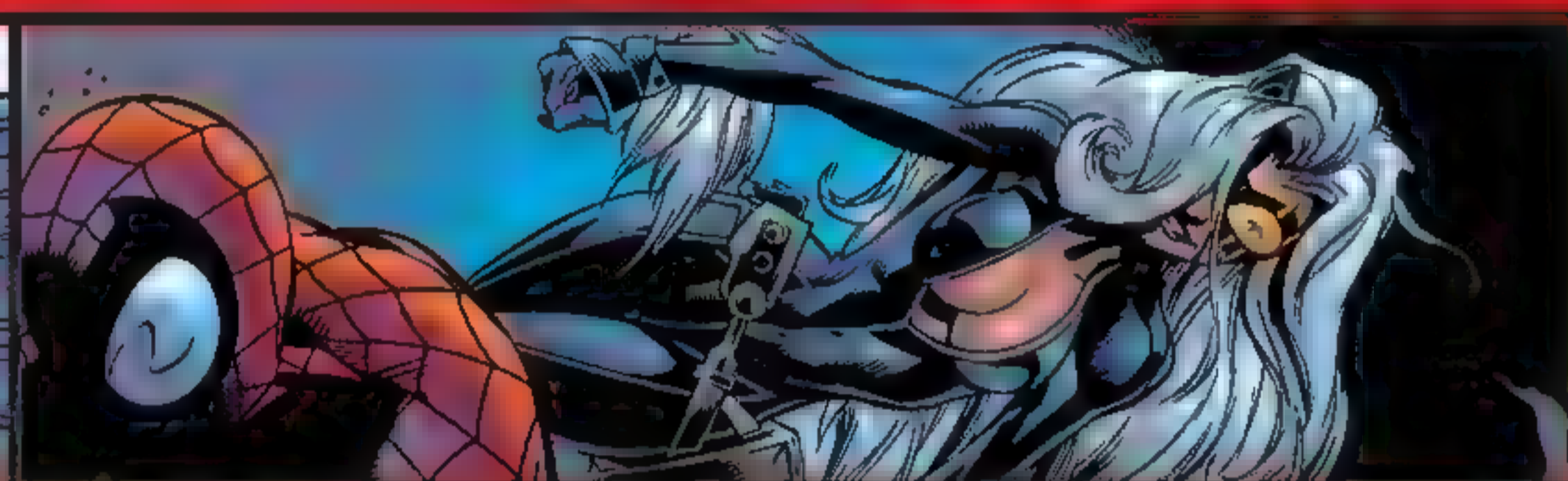
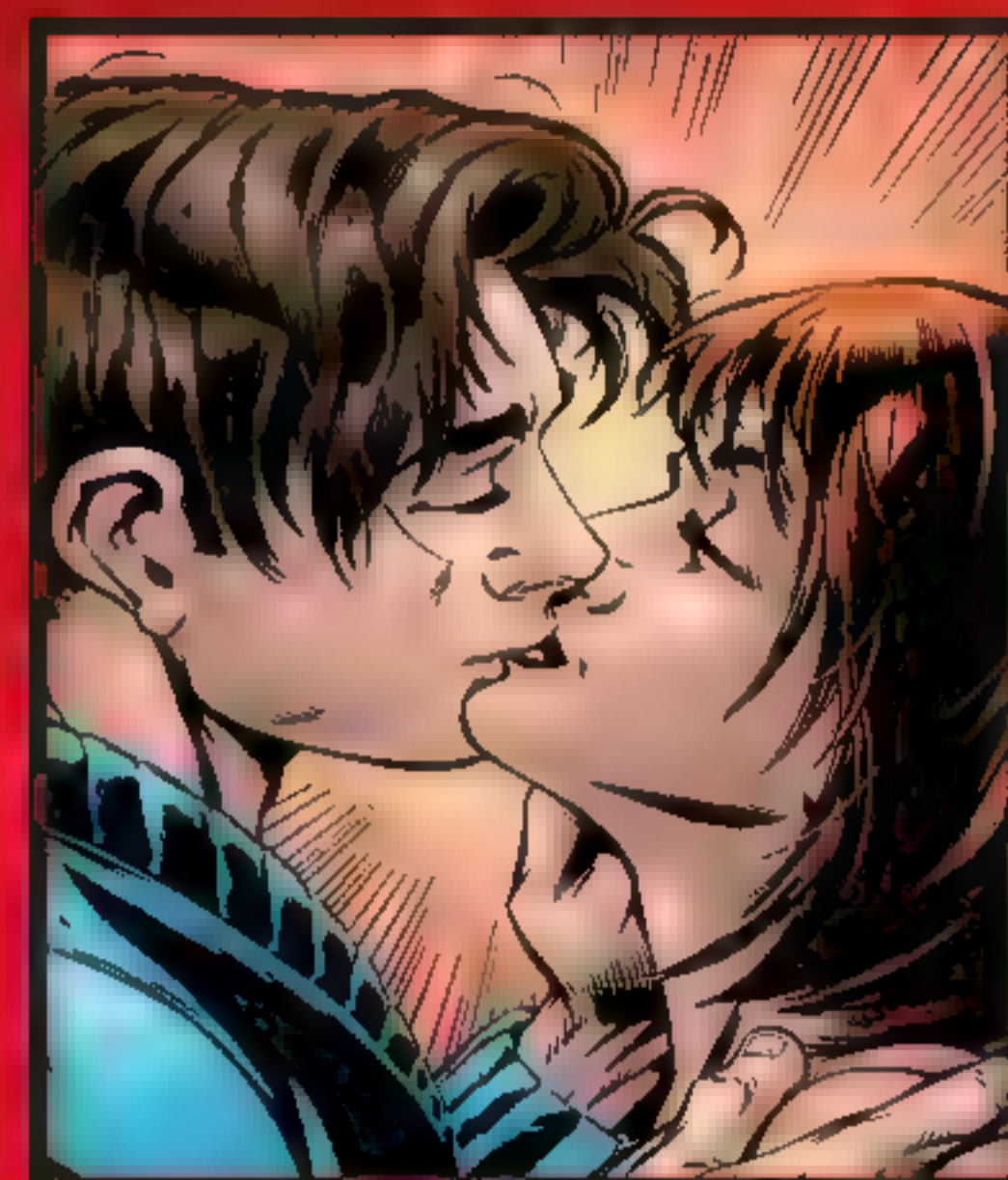
With no family left for the poor girl, Aunt May invites Gwen to live with her and Peter...which puts an understandable strain on Peter and MJ.

With his relationship on the rocks, Peter needs someone to talk to—so he looks up his childhood friend, Eddie Brock. Eddie is studying at Empire State University, working on a prototype biomedical suit originally devised by Peter and Eddie's fathers. The suit will diagnose and cure diseases...and could potentially grant the user superhuman strength.

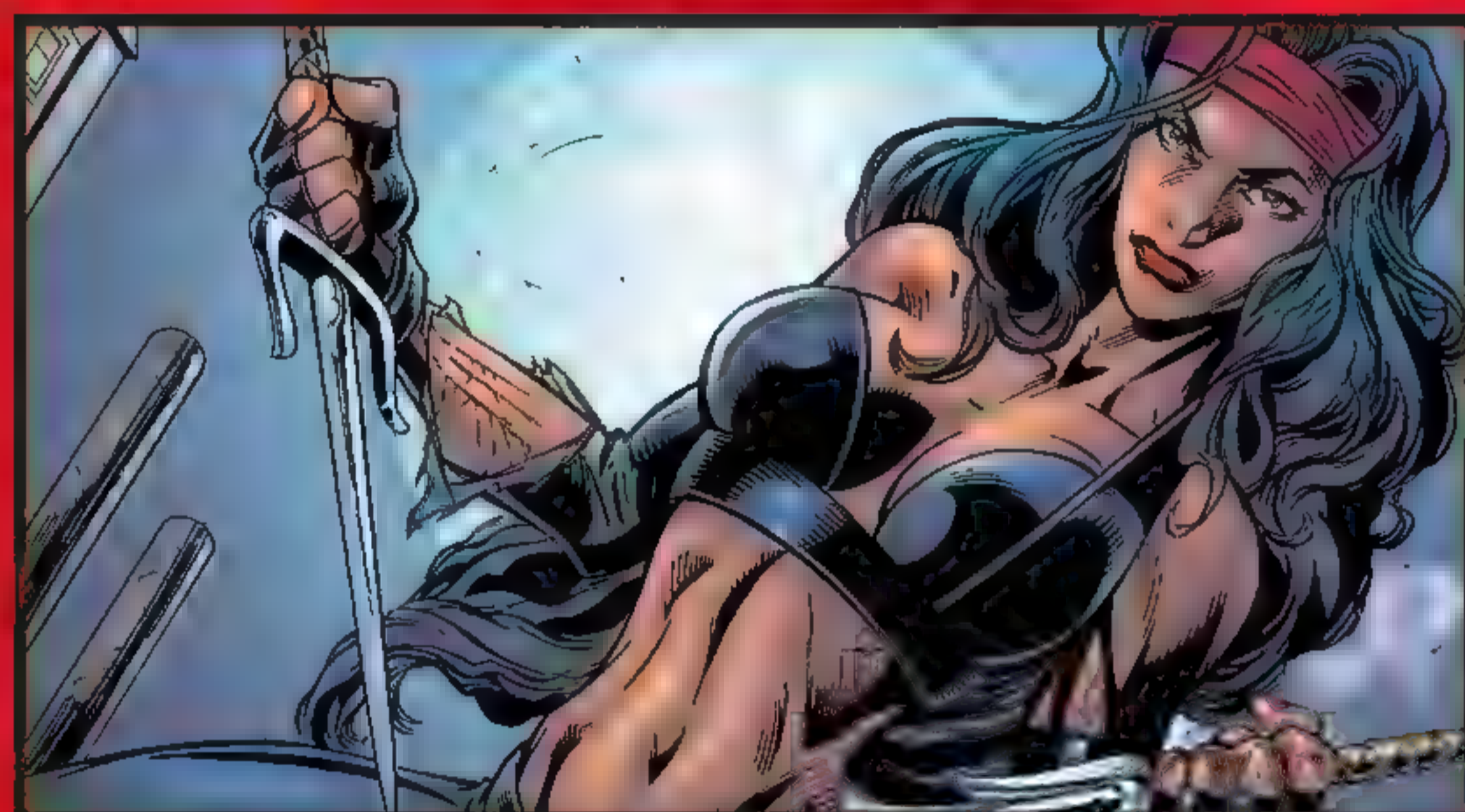


However, the suit soon mutates into something much more dangerous. Peter manages to free himself from its clutches and warn Eddie of the danger...but Eddie sees not danger, but opportunity! He dons the suit willingly, and Venom is born!

Peter manages to defeat Venom, but his life is in shambles. The brief rise in popularity of the mutant known as Geldoff gives Peter the chance to reconcile with MJ...



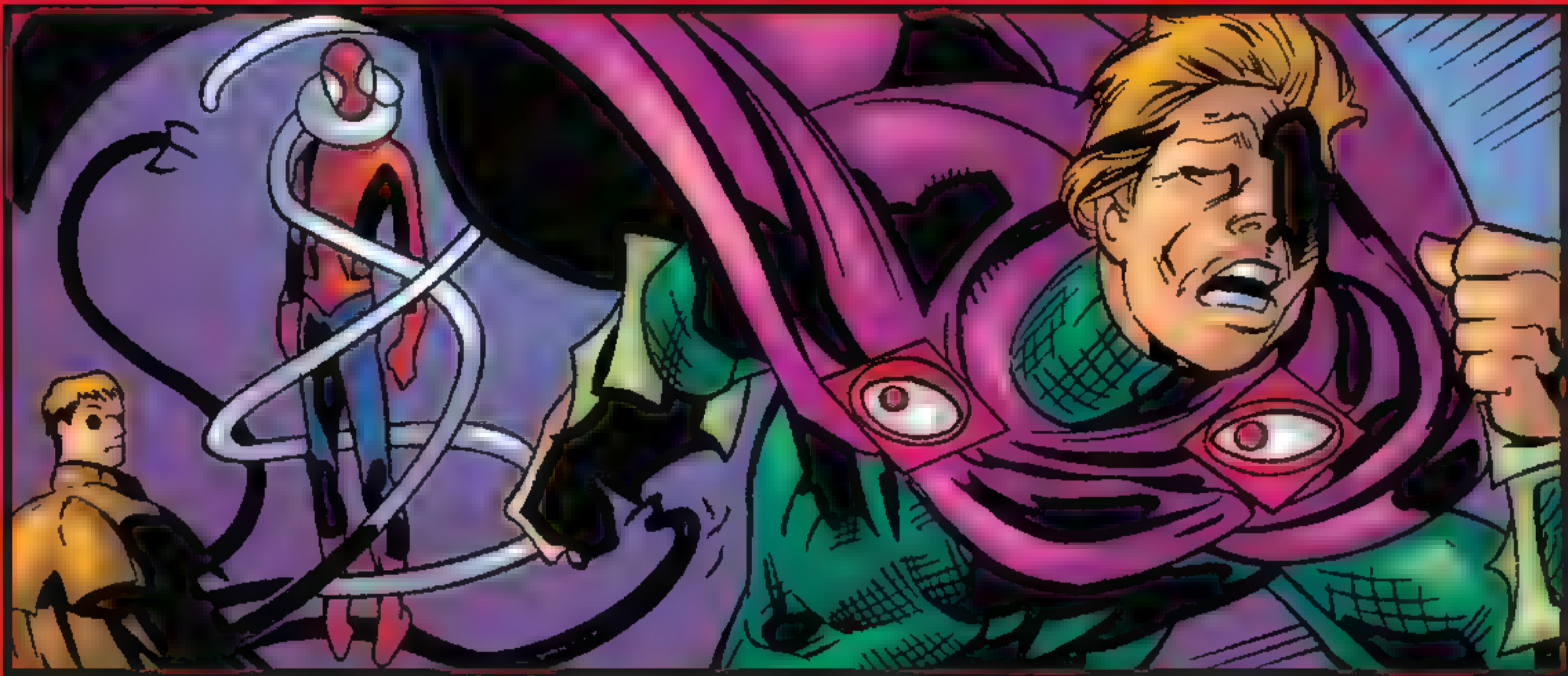
...but that isn't the end of his girl trouble. When the Kingpin is cleared of all charges and returns to New York to finance District Attorney candidate Sam Bullett, Spidey meets not only the cat-burglar-with-a-vendetta-against-the-Kingpin, Black Cat...but also the Kingpin's favorite assassin, Elektra!



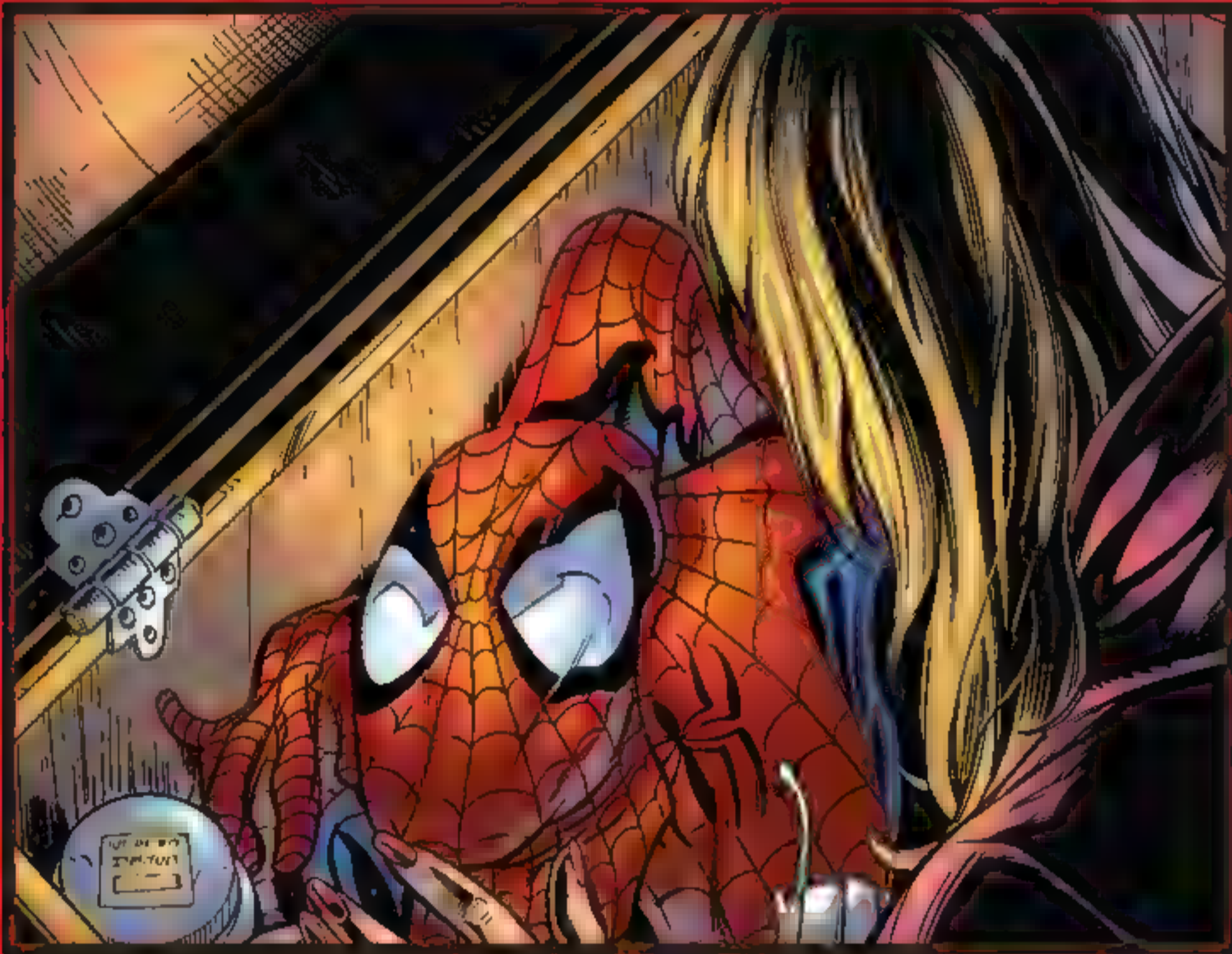
Yet Spider-Man's toughest battle is still to come, as five of his most dangerous foes—the Goblin, Dock Ock, Sandman, Elektro, and Kraven—force Peter to join in their attack on the White House! The Six are defeated when Nick Fury puts Norman face-to-face with his son, causing the Goblin to hesitate long enough to be taken down by Fury's forces.



What happens next is possibly the most unexpected thing in Peter's unusual life—*Spider-Man: The Movie* begins filming!



But when Doc Ock breaks out of prison in a jealous rage, the movie turns into a surreal mix of fact and fiction!

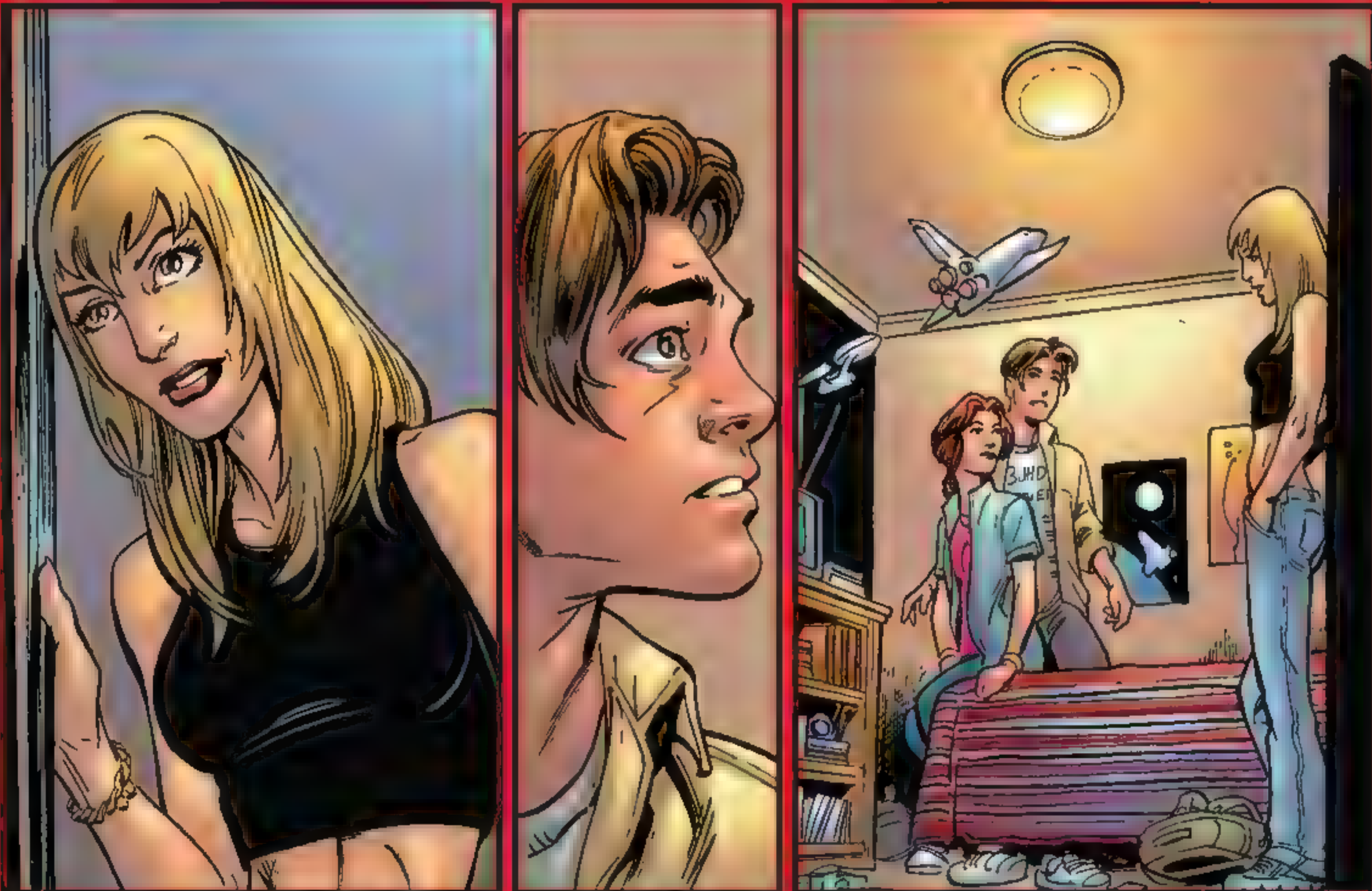


After a brutal fight, Peter defeats Doc Ock again, and returns home...but Gwen has learned his secret.

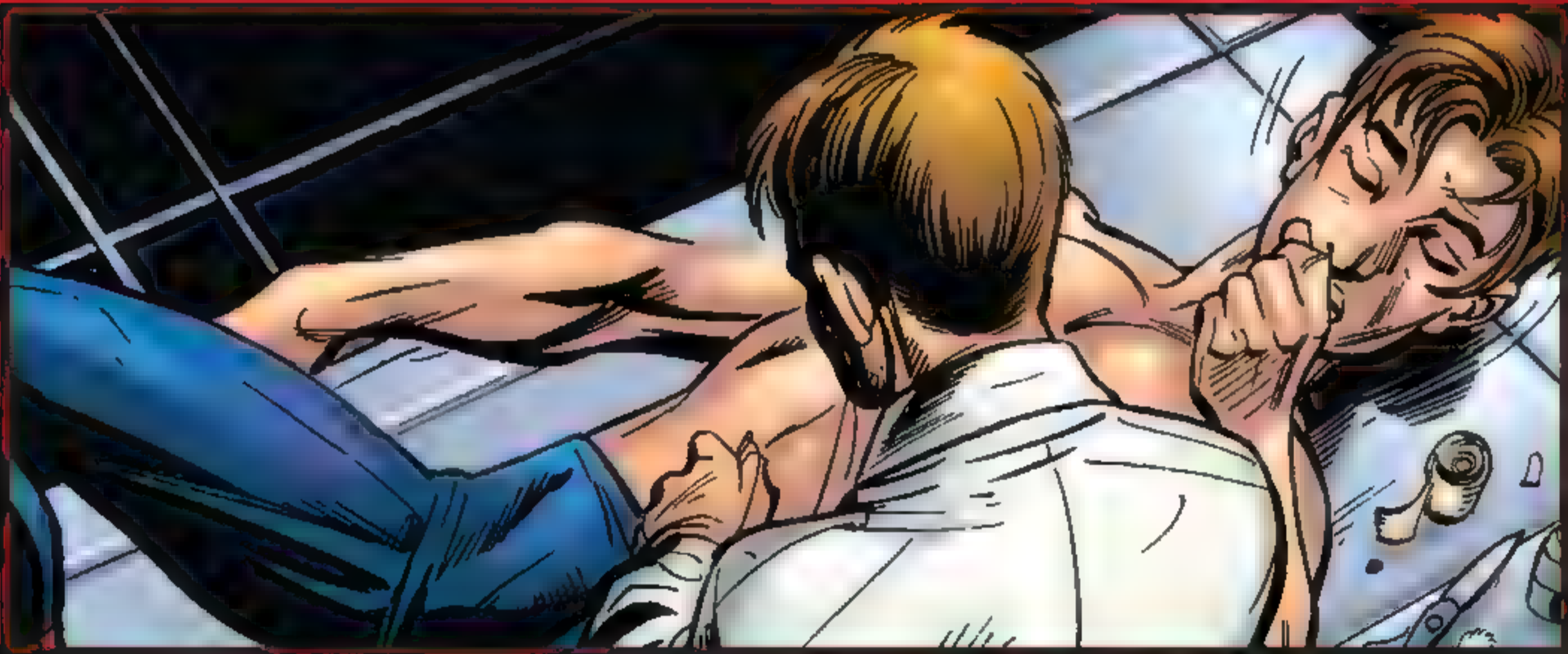
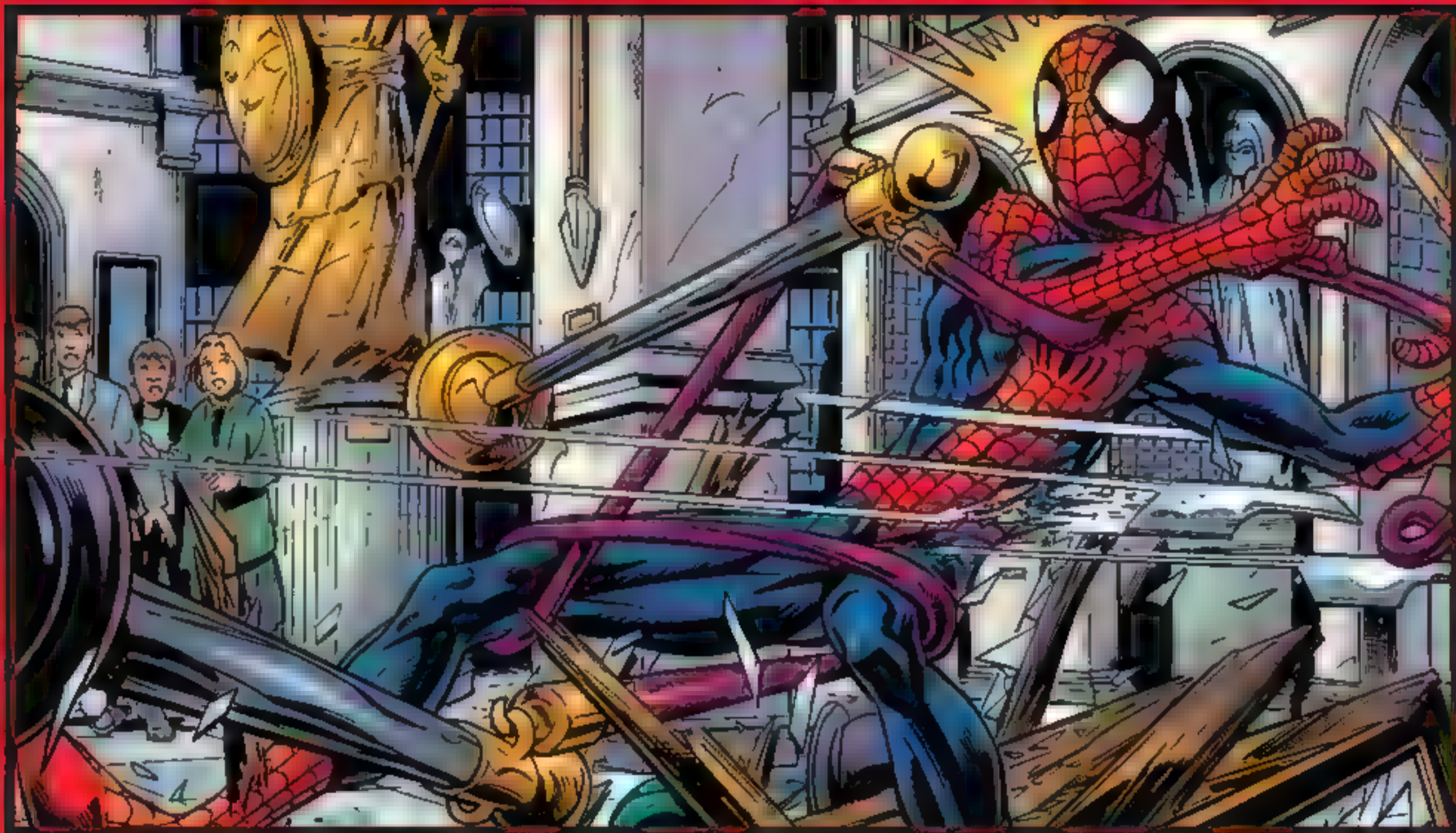
Still blaming Spider-Man for her father's death, Gwen confronts Peter—with her father's gun.



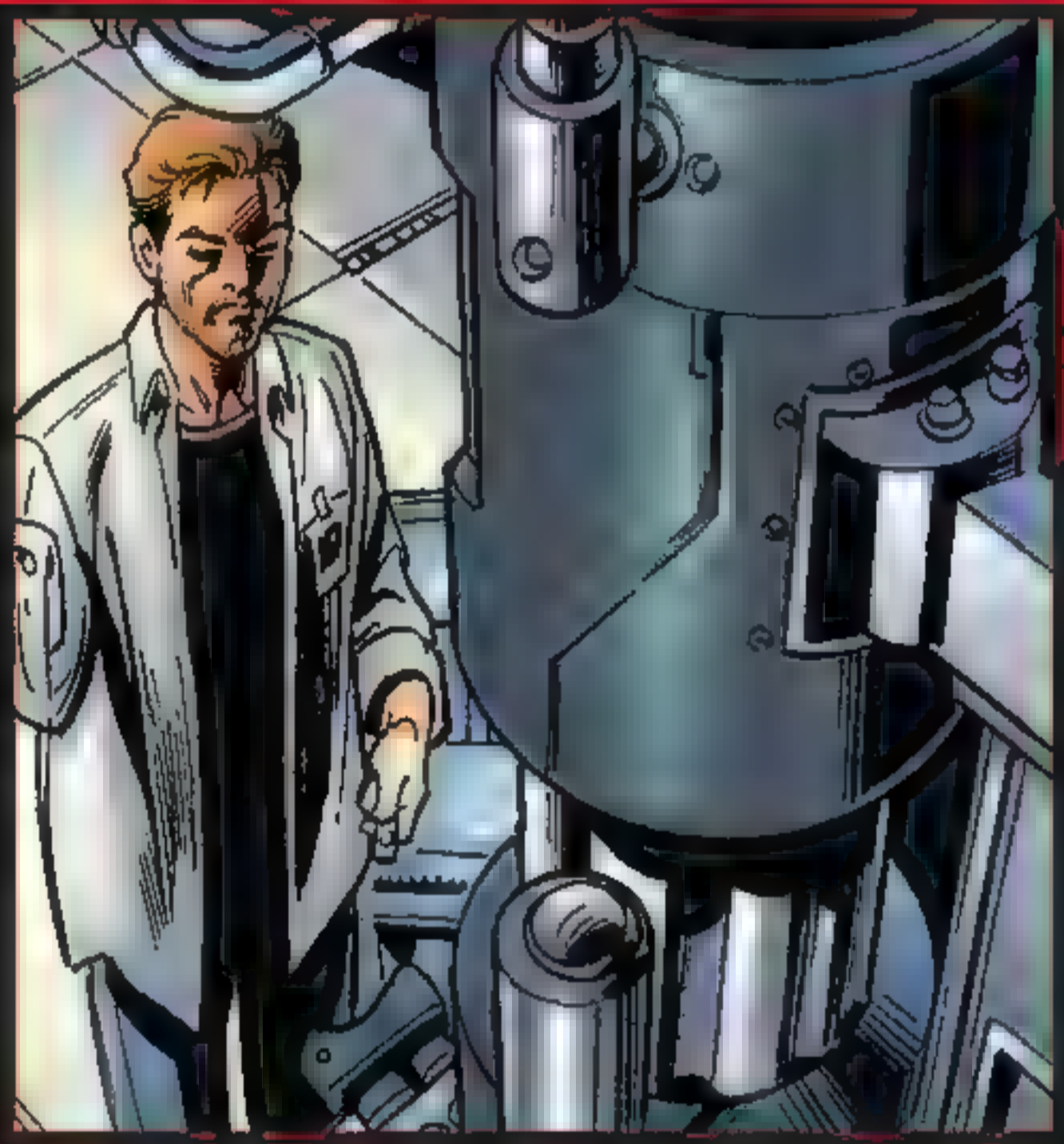
When a noise outside distracts Gwen, Peter manages to grab the weapon. Gwen runs off, but soon returns, having made peace with herself. She now shares the secret with Peter and MJ, and forms a unique bond with her would-be rival for Peter's affections.



Clearly, the stakes have been raised yet again for Peter, and it isn't long before he is wounded in battle...



Peter seeks the help of Dr. Curt Connors, who—when a formula he had created to grow back his missing arm inadvertently transformed the scientist into a psychotic reptile—had once fought Spidey.



Wondering if Peter's super-powers could be used to help normal people, Connors combines some of Peter's DNA with the research that led to Venom's creation.



Needless to say, things don't go as planned. Conner's research gives birth to Carnage, a remorseless killing machine with Peter's memories... including memories of Peter's loved ones...

The worst thing that could ever happen to Peter, happens. Carnage travels to Peter's house, finds Gwen Stacy...and murders her.





Peter snaps. He tracks down Connors, realizing the scientist has created this monster. As Peter confronts him—Carnage attacks.



Peter is relentless, eventually killing the creature. But Gwen is dead, and Peter—by virtue of his double life—is responsible.



As Peter's life collapses, Spider-Man's gets more bizarre, as he briefly switches minds with Wolverine (of the X-Men)...



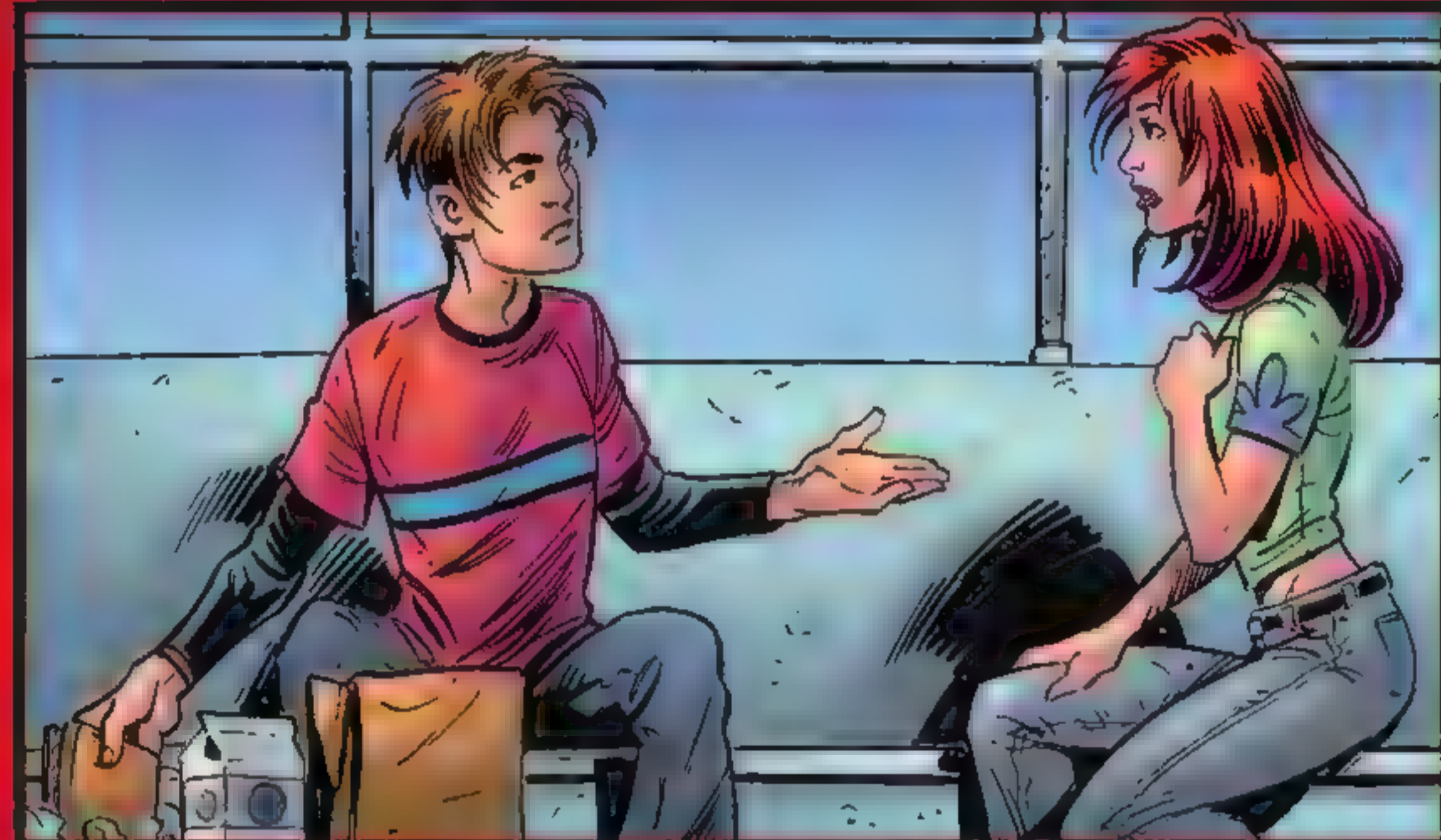
...hangs out with the Fantastic Four's Johnny Storm...



...and teams up with Doctor Strange to fight a creature called Nightmare!



But strangest of all is when Harry Osborn returns! Harry has blocked the memories of his father's transformation, and instead blames Peter/Spider-Man for the death of his mother. He confronts Peter with these feelings—and reveals that he had been romantically involved with MJ before she dated Peter!



This has an unexpected impact on Peter and MJ's relationship. As Peter pushes MJ further and further out of his life, MJ thinks Peter is jealous of Harry—but Peter just doesn't want to see MJ end up like Gwen.



Meanwhile, Harry's sanity is clearly slipping away. Harry's suppressed memories cause him to hallucinate an imaginary colleague of his father, Mr. Shaw, who leads Harry to one of his father's (very real) secret labs.

When Harry finally remembers all of the events of his father's transformation—including the moment when the original lab exploded, bathing Harry in the Oz Formula—Harry himself undergoes a startling change...becoming the Hobgoblin!

In an effort to force Spider-Man to kill him and end his misery, Harry goes on a rampage through New York. Eventually Spider-Man and S.H.I.E.L.D. exhaust Harry and defeat him. But Fury wants to know what's in the Oz Formula, so he can use it to strip the increasingly-a-threat-to-authority Peter of his powers!



Coming so soon on the heels of Gwen's death, the Hobgoblin incident proves to Peter that his relationship with MJ is placing her in grave danger. Fearing for her safety, Peter ends the relationship.

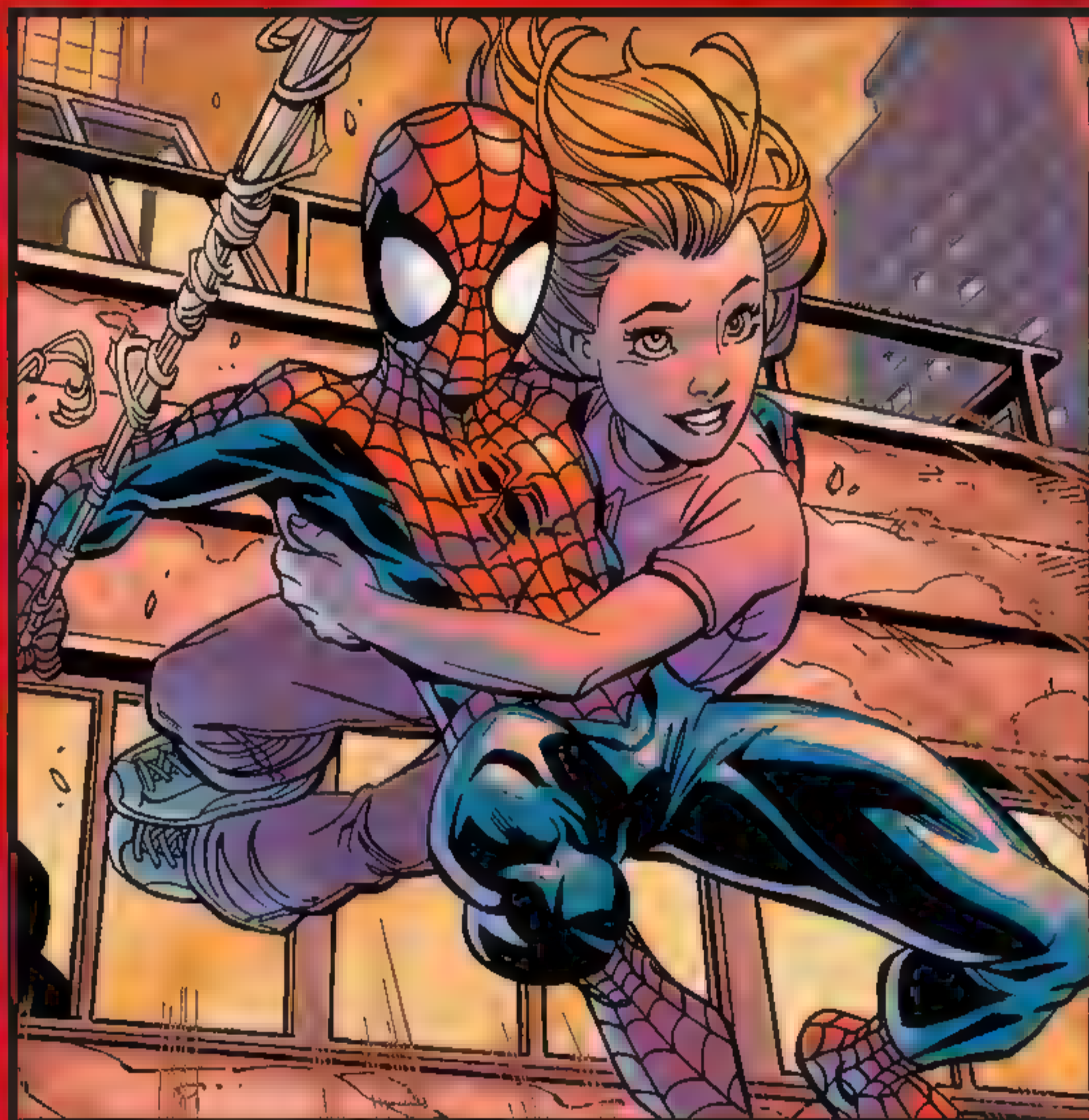




In typical Peter Parker fashion, he leaps straight from the frying pan into the fire, first dealing with a costumed gang war, when a criminal called Hammerhead tried to step into the Kingpin's territory...



...then he is captured by the mercenary known as Silver Sable! But this last part is made a little easier by the knowledge that there's a new woman in Peter's life...



...Kitty Pryde of the X-Men! She'd met Peter a few times before, but her phone call one afternoon changes Peter's life, finally giving him a sense of hope he's been missing since Gwen died. Knowing that Kitty is a trained super hero allows Peter to give himself permission to become close to her.



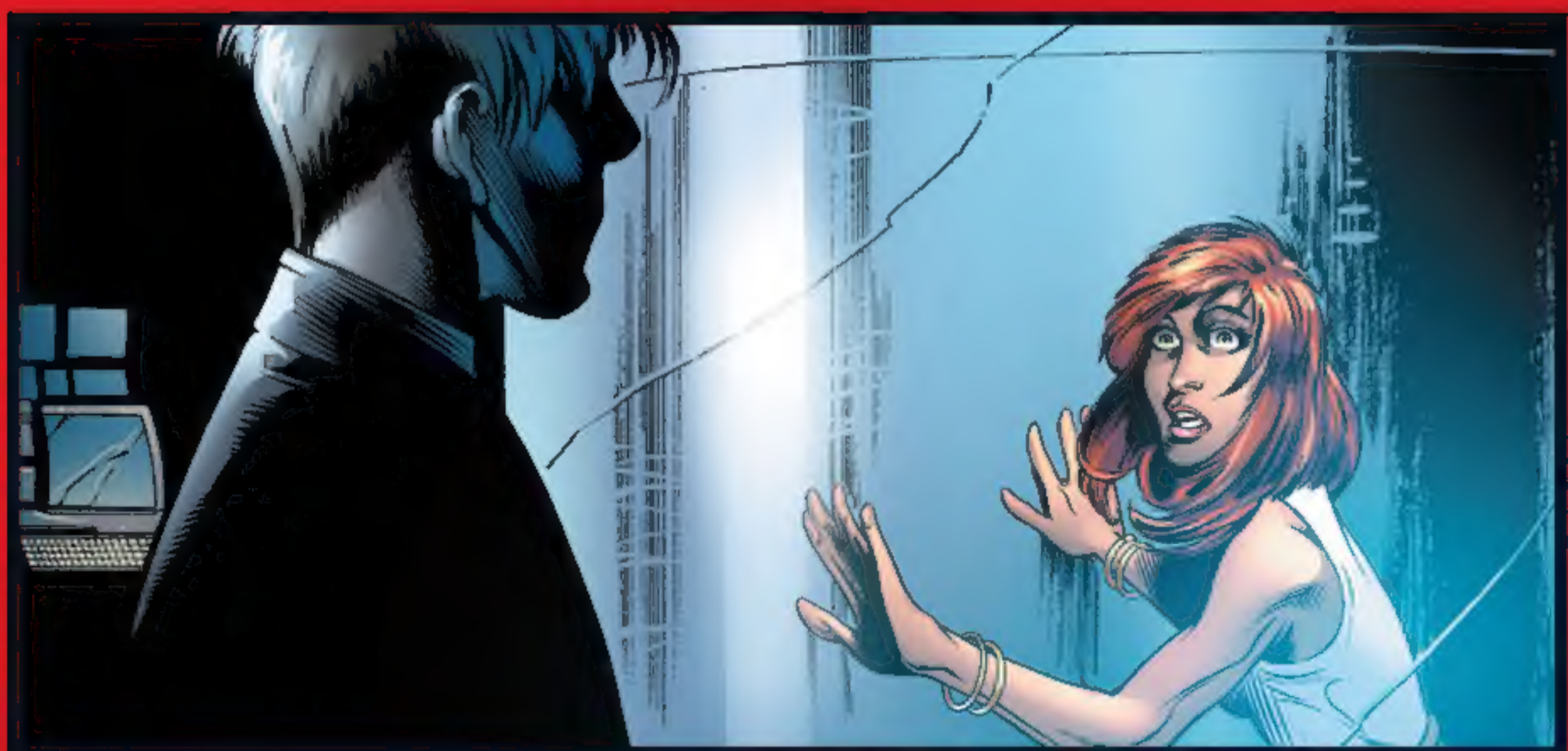
It's not long before Peter finds himself in the midst of the X-Men's battle with Deadpool...



...but after surviving that battle, Peter confronts the Scorpion, who turns out to be an exact duplicate of...



...himself! Peter takes his double to the Fantastic Four, who confirm that this new Peter is a clone.



But before Peter has a chance to react to this fact, he learns that Mary Jane has been kidnapped! In his search for his ex-girlfriend, Peter comes toe-to-toe with a mysterious woman wearing a spider costume...



...then an inexplicably alive Gwen Stacy...

...and finally (after revealing his secret identity to Aunt May) his long presumed-dead father—Richard!

And after the mind-blowing revelations of this issue, the only place to find out more is in the next issue of **ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN!**



ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

Two big topics: Gwen's back, and...Mark Bagley is leaving *Ultimate Spider-Man* with issue 110. It's true. But the bright side is: his ten remaining issues are more issues than most artists' entire runs, on most series...

But anyway, *Ultimate Spider-Man* fans are the best fans. So don't let me get in your way—this 100th-issue celebration is your celebration!

Mr. Bendis,

I just read that issue 110 will be yours and Mark Bagley's last collaboration on *Ultimate Spider-Man*. If this is indeed true, I wanted to let you know how much I have enjoyed this comic during your marvelous run.

Without a doubt it has "classic" written all over it. *USM* is the reason I started collecting comics again, after a 20-year hiatus. Four years ago, a friend at work mentioned that he collected comics and was in fact going to something called a "comic book store" during lunch.

Out of curiosity I went with him and suffered two heart attacks.

One happened when I saw the cost of the new comics...and the other was brought on when I saw the value of many of the comics I used to have back in the sixties and seventies. I was hooked again and began buying the old Silver Age stuff I used to have.

It wasn't long, though, before I came across an issue of *Ultimate Spider-Man*. I read it and immediately began buying every back issue, until I was the proud owner of the whole run. I couldn't wait for the next one to come out.

I still consider the *Fantastic Four* run by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby the best ever, due to the fact that they pretty much created the Marvel Universe during it. Other than that, I can't think of another comic that compares with this wonderful body of work you and Bagley have created together. My congratulations to you both.

If I might make a suggestion in regards to the next Ultimate Spidey artist: Mr. Mark Brooks, who has done both *Annals*, is just great. I have truly enjoyed his work and would love to see him take over the reins once Mark leaves. I look forward to the future of *USM*, but no matter what, the duo of Bendis and Bagley is destined for the hall of fame. Best wishes to you both in the future.

"Srosiedrew" (email name)

Dear Ultimate Spider-Dudes,

Wow. Great job on the "Clone Saga" so far. And you do a great job of captivating us, pulling us in, and stunning us in each issue. But I got a few questions about issue 99:

1) Does Gwen have powers? 'Cause in one flashback panel she remembered looking out over the New York skyline...

2) The Peter Parker clone with the mangled face has gotta be Ultimate Kaine. But he's not the cold-hearted killer I remember. Or is he just obsessed with giving Mary Jane spider-powers?

3) Is Peter's dad a clone? Or is he an agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. (because he seems to already know Peter is Spider-Man) and faked his own death? Can't wait for issue 100. And until J. Jonah Jameson becomes Spidey's #1 fan, Make Mine Marvel!!

Blake
Edenton, NC

Dear Ultimate Crew,

I can't believe that Peter told Aunt May that he's Spider-Man—and she kicked him out. *Ultimate Spider-Man* keeps getting better and better—I mean Spider-Man and Scorpion; Nick Fury and Spider Slayers...this is awesome!

I've been collecting *USM* for a long time—and now it all comes to this. Also, I bet Gwen Stacy is

Carnage. Ohhh, I can't wait!

Anthony Morejon
Florida

Hi Guys,

I just read issue 99 of *USM* and I'm sitting wiping away tears after Pete's father walks in the door. I lost my Dad when I was 9 (I'm 34 now) and I turned to comics and wrestling for male role models.

I would have dreams of my Dad coming home while I was in the middle of a fight with my Mom...I guess that's why this story touched me so much. Please don't take Pete's dad away from him again.

Most folks don't want to see Spider-Man stories that vary too much from the original universe, but this is one variance that I can accept as a dream come true for Pete and (in a way) for myself.

Sincerely,
Neil Oliver
Rochester, Michigan

Yo to the Ultimate Spidey Crew!

First off, I am a *huge* fan of the Ultimate Marvel series, and have read every single issue of the ongoing *USM* title. Now for some crazy complaining...kinda...

Why is Richard back, and where is his wife? Why does Aunt May act like she knew?? Is Gwen Carnage?!? Why does Fury want to kill Peter?!? Is MJ's captor Kaine?!?!? Whew, glad I got that out of my system.

Don't worry, I love *USM*... Anyway, rock on, Bendis and company!!!

Make Mine Marvel!

Perry Ritter

Hello, any and all involved in the *Ultimate Spider-Man* line of comics.

I like to think of myself as fairly unique among comic readers by the graces of being female and teenaged, and most importantly for the fact that I began reading comics for reasons other than the gigantically-breasted splash pages.

Having said that, I am fairly certain that I speak for the vast majority of all Marvel fans past and present (most concretely the dozen or so to whom I have spoken about the current storyline, entitled, "Clone Saga") when I express nothing but disdain for that storyline, and utter disappointment for the turn that the series has taken.

I understand the importance of a big story for a landmark issue like the hundredth, but I must say that I don't find the "Clone Saga" an intelligent or even entertaining choice. Though I was not a comic reader for the original "Clone Saga," what I have researched, seen, and heard of it tells me it was one of Marvel's most marvelous flops. I know that the beauty of the Ultimate lines is that all characters are recreated with updated origins, looks and personalities. In fact, that's been one of my favorite things about the series—the fact that history can be rewritten, time slowed down, and storylines explored. However, I think that the "Clone Saga" would be better off dead.

As I understand it, characters should only be killed to move the story along. While I could pardon the sudden passing of Gwen Stacy (a practically useless character, to be blunt), but her sudden revival cheapened it all. So at the end of the 99th issue, we know there are at least two clone Peters, a clone Gwen, and a clone Aunt May and a clone of Peter's father. Now all we need is one of Uncle Ben to complete the picture. And of course, we can assume from Scorpion-Peter's rambling that there is a veritable zoo of clones.

I doubt my pleas will be heard, I doubt the story this close to closing can be saved, I just intend to

pass my disgust on to those who can do something, as I'm sure my friends and family are sick of hearing about it. On behalf of all fans, old and new, I ask you to pull something spectacular out of your butts to fix this mess, or I'm afraid there will be a lot fewer fans to see the two hundred mark...myself among them.

With hope and trepidation,
Amy Hoxsey

It has been forever since I wrote to the *Ultimate Spider-Man* letters column, and now has to be the appropriate time!!! Being a serious fan of the "Clone Saga" of the 90s and also a big fan of both Ben Reilly and Kaine (even Tom DeFalco's future version rocks!), it's excellent to see the Ultimate twist to this storyline.

It's just as crazy as (if not more so than) the old version, and things seem to be moving along at a crazy pace, too...Brian Bendis has a real talent for storytelling...making things seem really exciting. Dialogue keeps you interested in the story, and plenty of action makes the book a winner too!

And what can be said about "Bags" (don't leave...please!)? He has to feel a little gratification for making the "Clone Saga" storyline popular again, and I believe that newer readers will be checking the back issue bins for stories about Ben Reilly and the costumes Mark designed.

There is an excitement to the story, the same as it is with a whole lot of other stories in *Ultimate Spidey* that have been told before—but when retold by this team (no, the letterers, inkers, colorists, etc. are not chopped liver...they all work together!!) the whole thing becomes ten times more exciting.

If the old "Clone Saga" were told like this, Ben would still be wearing the webs! After all, Ben is the original Ultimate Spidey, and my fave Marvel Character to this day (well, it's between him and Ultimate Peter anyway!).

Really, if Bendis told a story of how Ben Reilly survived, we would believe it!! HAH!!!

Joel Goodwin

Dear Ultimate Marvel staff,

Wow...just wow. The clone saga is amazing, no it's *ultimate* (I had to). I have never enjoyed a comic saga more than this. I would like to say that Brian Bendis is a spectacular writer and I hope he stays onboard for a long time to come. And Bagley's art is wonderful and I hate to see him go.

Your loyal fan,
Luke Mckaig

Wow—the "Clone Saga" you are presenting is really shaking the foundation of the Spider-Man character!

So many variables going on it's simply mind-blowing! I have a suspicion on how this story came to be, but until parts 4-5 come out I won't disclose any theories just yet. All I want to know is if the "Spider-Woman/Girl" Peter encountered is a key to this story or just a pawn in order to get things going?

Well, until the next segment I remain a fan!

Tom Rosado

You guys are great at the whole *Ultimate Spider-Man* thing.

I'm really enjoying the "Clone Saga" (gotta say it's the best by far). There's just one thing bothering me...in an earlier issue you said that Gwen Stacy is dead for good—what's going on? Sorry, just little things like this get to me.

Well, keep up the fantastic work on *Ultimate Spider-Man*.

Alex Eure

Dear Ultimate Spider-Folks,

Wow. This is shaping up to be a real doozy of

a story—certainly worthy of this outstanding series' 100th issue. Congrats on that, by the by—it seems like only yesterday I was picking up issue eight at the local anime shop, after reading the first six issues in Dot-Comic form. At the time, I was younger than Peter. *Ultimate Spider-Man* has been with me through a lot of times, good and bad. Thank you.

Now, *Ultimate Scorpion* is awesome-looking even aside from the big reveal, and *Ultimate Spider-Woman* is super-cool too, but I am so glad that Gwen is back.

Frankly, I expected her withered husk to regenerate after *Ultimate Carnage* was destroyed, but whether this is that or it's a clone (natch), I hope she sticks around. I know there are those who say that "dead means dead" and that Gwen Stacy's death is pivotal to any incarnation of Spider-Man, but I don't care. I'm much more interested in reading stories featuring *Ultimate Gwen* (the most truly *Ultimate*-ized character since *Ultimate Nick Fury* himself) than I am in reading yet another "oh woe is me, I'm Spider-Man but I can't save my loved ones" story.

Until *Ultimate Nick Fury* has *Ultimate* snakes on the Triskelion, Make Mine *Ultimate Marvel*!

Bob Wilson

Dear *Ultimates*,

I just learned yesterday that Mark Bagley will be leaving *USM* after issue #110. I am very sad to learn this, almost as sad as when Peter David left his longterm run on *The Incredible Hulk*. Mr. Bagley's work has been nothing short of exceptional, and has been a big part of the reason that I've bought every issue since day one...and have shared them all with my son, Jacob.

I'd like to send a huge "thank you" to Mark for all his hard work, commitment to deadlines and quality, and talent that he's shared with us.

As for the next artist, I'd like to recommend Mr. Gary Frank. Since he just finished up his run on *Squadron Supreme*, I think he'd be an excellent addition to the *Ultimate* team. I've been a big fan of his work for a long time and think his renditions of Spidey, MJ, Aunt May and villains alike would be very appealing to the *Ultimate* fans out there.

Until Doc Ock pens four comics at once (one title for each mechanical arm), Make Mine *Marvel*!

Rick Hansen
Phoenix, Illinois

USM Creators,

Ultimate Spider-Man is the best entertainment in existence.

Dan Dutra

Hello and well wishes to one and all,

I will admit that I have not read as much of *USM* as I probably should have. I have picked up several of the first issues and read up some of the graphic compilations of several volumes, so I know some of the high points, such as the Green Goblin, Hobgoblin, *Ultimate Venom* and *Ultimate Carnage*. I am also aware of the breakup of Peter and MJ.

First, let me say that I actually *like* that change. Since this is intended to be a different timeline for these characters, who I have enjoyed growing up with, I say go with the Peter/Kitty couple. I like them together and it's a very nice change.

Secondly, just picked up issue 98. When I heard there was going to be an *Ultimate Spider-Woman*, I was intrigued. I like her already. Please, for the love of God almighty, keep this character around. I want to know more about her, and I want to see where things could go with her, whether it means getting her own book or just getting the occasional appearance in *USM* or the *Ultimates* or *Ultimate X-Men* or whatever.

She already has a lot of potential. But please, don't go and have her be the Gwen Stacy clone or something. That'd just be strange, since the reappearance of Gwen is enough of a shock to Peter already.

In any case, as I said before, please keep her around! She'd be a good reason to get into the *Ultimate* books again, beyond just the occasional

issue here and there and the *Ultimate Galactus* saga.

With best regards from a loyal fan of Marvel Comics as a whole,

Marc Weinstein

Hello *USM* people!

This is my first time writing in; I have just recently gotten into comics. I found *Ultimate Spider-Man* 1 in the webcomics on the Marvel site, and was hooked. As a female fan, what really got my attention was the depth of the dialogue, and the feeling that goes with it, such as when Gwen was mourning her father. You could really feel her pain.

But my favorite feature is the romance between Peter and MJ. It's a shame the spider-marriage can't be written like this in the regular Marvel Universe—you can really feel the love between them. I really miss them being a couple...Peter and Kitty make an interesting couple, but she isn't the heart and soul of *Ultimate Spider-Man*, like MJ is.

Also, the "Clone Saga" is awesome!!! The first two issues have been fantastic. I cannot wait to see where this goes, particularly with the blonde Peter clone who took MJ. I haven't been this excited about any issue ever!!! Can't wait to see where this goes!

Sincerely,
Esther Bryan

First off:

USM has, far and away, been my favorite comic (be it super hero, indie, or manga) since I laid my hands on the first graphic novel. Team Double B (Bendis and Bags) is one of the strongest in comics. Thanks for bringing quality and freshness to the Spider-Man franchise.

The ONLY bone I've had to pick with the *Ultimate Spidey* run has been killing Gwen. She was a fun character, a very fresh and modern take on a previously boring character, whose contemporary presence in the Parker household (and life) added a new layer of depth and character intrigue to what has been in the past a formulaic story. Hence, killing her, particularly for what seemed to be no good reason at all, really soured me: I had to step away for quite a few issues afterwards. I've been back for a while, and I see that the one character I didn't expect to see again is back. It's good to see Gwen again.

I do truly hope that this is more than a one-issue, "shock" gimmick, that Gwen is Gwen and is back to stay, and that she continues to be a fun, fascinating presence in Peter's life for at least the next 100 issues.

I have no problem with the *Ultimate* line—for the sake of keeping things new and unique—not always adhering to the main line, and if that means keeping Gwen alive and redefining her relationship with Peter (they had a cool bro/sis thing going for a while), then I'm very happy with that.

Later,
Alexander Harris

Dear *Ultimate Spidey*,

Well, I just finished checking the news on newsarama.com, and found myself oddly shaken. You see, I just found out that Mark Bagley would be leaving one of my favorite books as of issue #110. Now, mind you, I said one of my favorite books, but Bagley, he is my favorite artist, ever. I'm talking back to his days on *Amazing Spider-Man*, to *Thunderbolts*, and then *Ultimate Spidey*.

As an aspiring artist myself, I have watched and been inspired by Bagley's work since I was a little kid. I don't know if anyone else notices when they look at an artist's work, but you can often see their style shifting and changing as they work on a series, particularly over an extended period of time. But of all artists, I have always loved seeing Bagley's style change as time goes on.

Look at the first few issues of *USM*—very good, but so very different from how the series looks now. A bold style, with lots of dynamic angles and distinctive facial expressions. You become immersed in the world that Bagley creates, a world that you can tell a great deal of thought has been put into.

Each arc of *USM* feels like it is set in a living, breathing New York; you never get that "sound-

stage" feeling that you get from other artists' work.

The memories I have from Bagley's work! From typical Spidey tales to the God-awful original "Clone Saga" (Amazing Scarlet Spider, anyone?), I was a kid hooked from the start, through even the most painful of plotlines. Now, at twenty years old, I've been enjoying Bagley's run on *USM* above all else he has done.

So, with this, I would just like to thank my artistic inspiration, a man of talent, who knows how important it is to a true comic fan to see an artist stand by a comic and its readers for a healthy stretch. I hope Bagley continues to stay on track as one of the most talented, consistent artists to ever hit comics.

Thanks, Bagley!
Robert Marrujo
San Leandro, CA

I have to just put down a *Comic Shop News* paper with an article that had an interview with the one and only *Ultimate Spider-Man* artist, Mark Bagley, where he says that he is going to leave the series after issue 110.

I am saying this in all seriousness when I ask... why isn't anyone doing anything about it?!!!

I am well aware that working for so long on a great comic book and outdoing yourself again and again can probably take its toll on anyone, but please don't let Mr. Bagley go! He is the visual master behind *USM*! Even though Mr. Bendis' writing contributed to the success of *USM*, I believe that if it wasn't for Mark Bagley's vision for *USM* the series wouldn't have gotten to where it is! Not to mention that his work as a whole inspired me to become an illustrator.

If Mr. Mark Bagley ever reads this letter, then I will ask of you to please stay with the amazing comic book you helped create, or at least for another 100 issues...although I know that is asking for *too* much.

Sincerely,
Edgar Torres

Thanks to everybody who's written, and everybody who's just been reading! All of us at *Ultimate Spider-Man* can't tell you enough how gratifying it is to have so many fans who care so much about this book. The next 100 issues are all for you, too!

NEXT ISSUE



CARNAGE STRIKES!

JOHN BARBER & NICOLE WILEY
ASSOCIATE EDITORS

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN
c/o MARVEL COMICS

417 5TH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10016

If you don't want your name and address printed, please let us know. Letters may be edited for content and length.

RALPH MACCHIO
EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF

E-MAIL:
ULTIMATEOFFICE@MARVEL.COM
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